











STRAY LEAVES

FROM

A PASSING LIFE,

AND

OTHER STORIES.



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CONTENTS.

· ·									
STRAY LEAVES FROM A PASSING LI	IFE:							1	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—Mr. Culpepper m in a Churchyan		a P	ropo	sal—	-A	Renc	ount	er	5
			4 D.	6	0	1			
CHAPTER II.—A Dinner at the						ls,	•	٠	20
CHAPTER III.—Au Revoir—The	Pilg	rim's	s Pro	ogres	s,	•	•	٠	33
CHAPTER IV.—We all meet to I	part,	•	•			•	•	٠	51
FLYWHEEL BOB,	•	•	•	•	•	*	•	٠	62
VILLAGE LIFE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE				•	•	•			78
A CHRISTMAS VIGIL,	•	•	•	•	•		•		93
MADAME'S EXPERIMENT,			•	•	•		•	•	100
THE GREAT STRIKE AT ERRICKDAL	E,	•	•	•		•	•		109
THE DOOM OF THE BELL,	• (1)	•	•	•	•	•			119
A Daughter of the Puritans,	•	•	•	•	•				134
A LEGEND OF THE RHINE, .	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	146
A STORY WITH TWO VERSIONS,	•	•	4	•	•	•	•	. :	154
YULE RAPS,	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		165
Monsieur Gombard's Mistake,	•	•	•	4	•	•		. 1	183
THE DEVIL'S CHRISTMAS GIFT, .		•						. :	207

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STRAY LEAVES FROM A PASSING LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

MR. CULPEPPER MAKES A PROPOSAL-A RENCOUNTER IN A CHURCHYARD.

IT was one of those golden November mornings that throw a mystic glamour over New York. warm haze draped the great city. softening its deformities, blending its beauties. In its magic light the very street-cars took on a romantic air, as they sped along loaded with their living freight. The bales of goods on the sidewalk, huddled together in careless profusion, were no longer the danger which they are generally supposed to be by elderly gentlemen who have due regard for life and limb, but gracious droppings rather from Pandora's box, raining down fresh and bright from the hands of the genial goddess. What in the garish sun were vulgar business houses filled with sober goods and peopled with staring and sleek-combed clerks, assumed under this gorgeous drapery the aspect of mystic temples of commerce, where silent and solemn-eyed priests stood patiently all the day long to call in the passers-by to worship. The lofty policeman, looming like a statue at the corner, was not the ferocious, peanut-chewing being that he is commonly supposed to be, but a beneficent guardian of the great temple of peace. The busy crowds of brisk business men that hurried along, untouched as yet by the toil and the soil of the day, were freshfaced and clear-eved, chatty and cheerful. Thompson stepped out as cheerily as though he were just beginning that strange task, on

which so many ambitious mortals have gone down, of performing his thousand miles in a thousand hours: for Thompson, happy man! knew not as yet what was so calmly awaiting him on his desk-that heavy bill that he was bound to meet, but which, strange to say, had quite slipped his memory. And there is Johnson walking arm-in-arm with Jones, Johnson's face wreathed in sunny smiles the while. Johnson's heart is gay and his step light, and he feels the happy influence of the morning. Jones is sadly in want of a confidential clerk, and his friend is dilating on the treasure that he himself possesses—that very clerk who, he learns on reaching his office, absconded last night with a fearful amount of Johnson's property. Nor, on the other hand, does that eager-faced youngster, the shining seams of whose garments tell of more years than his seamless face and brow, know that at last the gracious answer that he has so longed for awaits his arrival, and that the bright opening at length lies before him that is to lead him on to fortune, if not to fame, more than the five hundred and forty-six rival applicants know that their addresses have been rejected. As yet the day is marked with neither white bean nor black, and so let us hope, with this mighty stream pouring on and on and on down the great thoroughfares of the city, that the white beans may outnumber the black when the day is done, and that

what is lost here may be gained there; for we are of them, brethren of theirs, and joyous hopes of this kind cost little, while, at least, they harden not the heart. And so the whole city, with its hopes and fears, its life and its death, moved out under the November haze that morning, and with it, as the central figure in the vast panorama, he whose stray leaves, it is hoped, may prove at least of passing interest to the many of whom he is one.

My special point of attraction that day was the office of The Packet, "a monthly journal of polite literature," to quote the prospectus, which was supported by "the ablest pens of both hemispheres," as the same prospectus modestly admitted. As at this time I was a pretty constant contributor to The Packet, I suppose that, according to the prospectus, I was fully entitled to take my stand among "the ablest pens of both hemispheres," whether I chose to insist on my literary rank or not. And as I contributed occasionally to other journals which were respectively, according to their several prospectuses, "the leading weekly," "the greatest daily," " the giant monthly," "the only quarterly," "the great art journal," etc., there could not possibly be any doubt as to my literary position. For all that, I confess I was still among the callow brood, and fear that, if any person had referred to me in public as "a literary man," the literary man would have blushed very violently, and felt as small as a titmouse. Still, I had that delicious feeling of the dawning of hope and the glorious uncertainty of a great ambition that always attend and encourage the first steps of a new career, whatever be its character. It was natural enough, then, that I should step out lustily among my fellows, my head high in air, and my heart higher still, drinking in the inspiration of the morning, piercing the golden mist with the eye of hope, feeling a young life throbbing eagerly within me, feeling a mysterious brotherhood with all men, gliding as through a fairy city in a gilded dream.

As I had several places to call at, it was late in the afternoon when I arrived at The Packet office to draw my little account. On entering I found an unusual commotion; something had evidently gone very Mr. Culpepper, the experienced editor of the journal of polite literature, was, to judge by the tones of his voice, in a towering rage. I fancied that I caught expressions, too, which were not exactly in accordance with polite literature. When Mr. Culpepper's temper did happen to fail, it was an event to be remembered, particularly as that event took place, on an average, some two or three times a week. Everything and everybody in the office was in a turmoil; for Mr. Culpepper's temper had an infectious quality that affected all its immediate surroundings. experienced eve could tell by the position of the dictionary, the state of the floor, the standing of the waste-basket, the precise turn of the editor's easy-chair, how the wind blew to Mr. Culpepper. this mild November afternoon it was clear that a terrific gale had sprung up from some unexpected quarter. It had ruffled what was left of Mr. Culpepper's hair, it blew his cravat awry, it had disarranged his highly intellectual whiskers, it spared not even his venerable coattails. His private office showed the effects of a raging tornado. Pigeon-holes had been ransacked; drawers had been wrenched open and rifled of their contents; Webster and Worcester lay cheek-by-jowl in the waste-basket; the easy-chair had a dangerous crick in the back; Mr. Culpepper himself was plunged ankle-deep in manuscripts that strewed the floor in wild confusion; while Mr. Culpepper's hands were thrust in his cavernous pockets, as he stood there on my entrance, a very monument of editorial despair.

Mr. Culpepper, like most men, was preferable when good-tempered. Indeed, though his opinions at times, particularly on the merits or demerits of my own compositions, were apt to be more emphatic than polished, Mr. Culpepper, when good-tempered, was by no means an unpleasant companion. In his stormy periods I always coasted as clear of him as I could: but it was now too late to sheer off. So, making the best of a bad bargain, I advanced boldly to meet the enemy, when to my surprise he greeted me with the exclamation.

"Oh! you are just the man I want-Can you tell a story—a good, lively Christmas story, with a spice of fun, a dash of love, a slice of plum-pudding, a sprinkling of holly and ivy, with a bunch of mistletoe thrown in? And, by the bye, if you have genius enough, a good ghost. Yes, a good, old-fashioned ghost would be capital. They are dying out now, more's the pity. Yes, I must have a ghost and a country churchyard, with a bowl of punch, if you want it. There are your materials. Now, I want them fixed up into a first-class Christmas story, to fill exactly eight pages, by four o'clock to-morrow afternoon at the Must have it to fit this illustration. Clepston was to have done it, but he has failed me at the

last hour, Just like him—he must go and get married just when I want my story. He did it on purpose, because I refused to advance his pay—married out of revenge, just to spite me. Well, what do you say?"

I said nothing; for Mr. Culpepper's rapidity and the novelty of his proposal fairly took my breath away. I had never yet attempted fiction, but there was a certain raciness in Mr. Culpepper's manner of putting it that urged me to seize my present opportunity. A good ghost-story within just twenty-four hours! A pleasant winter tale that should be read to happy families by happy firesides; by boys at school, their hair standing on end with wild excitement, and their laughter ringing out as only boys' laughter does; by sweet-faced girls-by everybody, in fact, with a vast amount of pleasure and not a twinge of pain. Thousands whom I should never know would say, "What a dear fellow this story-teller is!" "What a pleasant way he has of putting things!" "What --"

"Well, what do you say?" broke in Mr. Culpepper rudely; and I remembered that the story which was to win me such golden opinions from all sorts of people was yet to be written.

"I hardly know. Four o'clock to-morrow afternoon? The time is so very short. Could you not extend it?"

"Not a moment. Printers waiting now. If I can't have yours by that time, I must use something else; and I have not a thing to suit. Just look here," he said pointing to the floor, and glancing ruefully around; "I have spent the day wading through all these things, and there is nothing among the pile. A mass of rubbish, all of it!"

My resolution was made; I start-

"Mr. Culpepper, I will try. will stay up all night; and if there be a ghost yet unlaid, a pudding yet unmade, a piece of holly yet ungathered, or a bunch of mistletoe that has not yet done duty, you shall have them all by four o'clock to-morrow afternoon."

"Now, I rely on you, mind. Four o'clock sharp. Let it be brisk and frosty, bright as the holly-berries, and soothing as a glass of punch! We owe you a little account, I believe. Here it is, and now good-by till to-morrow afternoon."

Who has not experienced that half-fearful and yet wholly pleasant feeling of setting foot for the first time in a new and strange land? It was with some such feeling that my heart fluttered as I left the office of The Packet that afternoon. Yet what was I to achieve within the next four-and-twenty An eight-page Christmas story of the approved pattern, with the conventional sauces and seasonings-nothing more. The thing had been done a thousand times before, and would be done a thousand times again, as often as Christmases came round, and thought nothing of. Why should I be so fluttered at the task? Was this to be the great beginning at last of my new career? Was this trumpery eight-page story to be the true keynote to what was to make music of all the rest of my life? Nonsense! I said to myself: and yet why nonsense? Did not all great enterprises spring from small and insignificant beginnings? Were not all great men at some time or another babies in arms, rocked in cradles, fed on soothing-syrups, and carried about in long clothes? Did not a falling apple lead Newton on to the great discovery of gravitation? Was it not a simmering kettle that opened Watt's eyes to steam, and introduced the railway and the packet? Did not a handful of sand reveal the mines of California? Must not Euclid have started with a right reading of axioms as old as the world? Who shall fix the starting-point of genius? And why should not my first fictitious Christmas pudding contain the germ of wonders that were to be?

I can feel the astute and experienced reader who has been gracious enough to accompany me thus far already falter at the very outset of the short excursion we purposed taking together. I can feel the pages close over me like a tomb, while a weary yawn sings my death-dirge. But allow me, my dear sir, or my dear madam, or my much-esteemed young lady, to stay your hands just one moment, until I explain matters a little, until I introduce myself properly; and I promise to be very candid in all I have to say. You see-indeed, you will have seen already—that the gentleman who has just left Mr. Culpepper's presence was at this period of his life very young indeed, and proportionately ambitious. two facts will explain the fluttering of his heart at the cold-blooded proposal of spending an entire night at his writing-desk, delving his brain for the materials of a silly little story, while you, dear sir, have drawn over your ears, and over that head that has been rubbed into reverent smoothness by the gentle hand of time, the sleep-compelling night-cap; and while you, dear madam, while you have-done nothing of the kind. I plead guilty, then, at this time, to the twofold and terrible charge of outrageous youth and still more outrageous

ambition. But I have long since contrived to overcome the disgrace of excessive youth; while, as regards ambition, what once happened to a literary friend of mine has never happened to me: that morning I have been waiting for so long, so long, when I was to wake up and find myself famous, has not yet arrived-looks even as though it never meant to dawn. Literature was to me an unknown sea, upon which I had not fairly embarked. I had paddled a little in a little cockleshell of my own in sunny weather around friendly coasts, but as yet had not ventured to launch out into the great deep. The storm and the darkness and the night, the glory and the dread of the tempest, the awful conflicts of the elements, were as yet unknown to and unbraved by me. Indeed, as I promised to be candid, I may as well whisper in your ear that the main efforts of my pen at this precise period of my life were devoted to meeting with a calm front and easy conscience the weekly eye of Mrs. Jinks. Mrs. Jinks was my boarding-house keeper, a remarkable woman in her way, and one for whom I entertained an unbounded respect; but she was scarcely a Mme. de Staël, unless in looks, still less a Mme de Sévigné. Mme. Jinks' encouragement to aspiring genius was singularly small when aspiring genius could not pay its weekly board—a contingency that has been known to occur. Mrs. Jinks never fell into the fatal mistake of tempting the man to eat unless the man was prepared to pay. But even Mrs. Jinks could not crush out all ambition, so that I hugged Mr. Culpepper's proposal, as I went home that evening, with a fervor and enthusiasm that I had never before experienced; for it

seemed to open up to me a new vista of bright and beautiful imaginings.

For all that, I could not strike the clew. It seems a very easy thing, does it not, to concoct a passable enough Christmas story out of the ample materials with which Mr. Culpepper had so lavishly supplied me? Just try: sit down and write a good, short, brisk Christmas story, out of all the time-honored materials, and judge for yourself what an easy task it is, O sapient critic! a line from whose practised pen stabs to death a year of hopes, and projects, and labor. Strange to say, my immediate project dissolved and faded out of my mind, as I plodded homewards along the great thoroughfare I had trodden so serenely in the morning. The little Christmas story gave place to something new, something larger, something vague, indefinable, and mighty. A great realm of fiction unfolded itself before me-a realm all my own, a fairy island in a summer sea, peopled with Calibans and dainty Ariels, Mirandas and Ferdinands, and a thousand unseen creatures, waiting only for the wave of my magic wand to be summoned into the beauty of life, to bring sweet songs down from the cloudsof heaven, and whisperings of spirits far away that the earth had never yet heard. A mist sprang uparound me as I walked, and through it peered a thousand eyes, and from it came and went a thousand shapeless forms, whose outlines I could. half discern, but hold not. I could not bid them stay until I grasped. them. Something was wanting, a touch only, a magic word, but I could not find it. A charm was on: me, and more potent than I. It. was there, working, working, but I could not master it.

walked along in a dream. Men in throngs passed me by in what seemed a strange and awful silence. If they spoke, never a word heard I. Carriages and vehicles of every description I felt rolling, rolling past: but their wheels were strangely muffled, for never a sound fell on my ear. The fair, bright city of the morning was filled now with silent shadows, moving like ghosts in a troubled dream. Lights sprang up out of the mist as I passed along, but they seemed to shine upon me alone. Intensely conscious of my own existence, I had only a numb feeling of other life around me-At last I found myself at Mrs. Tinks' door. I took a letter from her hand, and seated at length in my own room, with familiar objects around me, the shadows seemed to lift, and I was brought back to the subject of my proposed night's work.

Still, I could not collect my thoughts sufficiently to bring them to bear, in a practical way, on the central idea around which my fiction was to take body and shape. The sudden strain on my imagination had been too severe; a kind of numbness pervaded my whole being, and the moments, every one of which was precious as a grain of gold, were slipping idly away. The feeling that all the power to achieve what you desire lies there torpid within you, but too sullen to be either coaxed or bullied into action. laughing sluggishly at the most violent effort of the will to move it. is, perhaps, one of the most exasperating that a man can experience. It is like one in a nightmare, who sees impending over him a nameless terror that it only needs a wag of a little tongue to divert, and yet the little tongue cleaves with such monstrous persistency to the roof

of the parched mouth that not all the leverage of Archimedes himself could move it from its place. That fine power of man's intellect, that clear perception and keen precision which can search the memory, and at a glance find the clew that it is seeking; that can throw out those far-reaching fibres over the garden of knowledge, gathering in from all sides the necessary stores, was as far away from me as from a madman's dream. I could fasten upon nothing; my brain was in disorder, while the moments were lengthening into hours, and the hours slipping silently away.

In despair I tried a cigar—a favorite refuge of mine in difficulties; and soon light clouds, pervaded with a subtle aroma, were added to those thinner clouds of undefined and indefinable images that floated around me, volatile, shadowy, intangible; mysterious, nebulous. Mr. Culpepper's " materials " had quite evaporated, and I began to think dreamily of old days, of anything, everything, save what was to the point. I remember how poor old Wetherhead, of all people in the world—" Leatherhead" we used facetiously to style him at college—came up before me, and I laughed over the fun we had with him. What a plodder he was! When preparing for his degree, he took ferociously to wet towels. had the firmest faith in wet towels. He had tried them for the matriculation, and found them "capital," he assured us. "Try a towel, Leathers," we would say to him whenever we saw him in difficulties. fellow! He was naturally dull and heavy, dense and persistent as a clod. It would take digging and hoeing and trenching to plant anything in that too solid brain; and yet he was the most hopeful fellow alive. He was possessed with the

very passion of study, without a streak of brightness or imagination to soften and loosen the hopeless mass of clay whereof his mind seemed composed; and so he depended on wet towels to moisten it. He almost wore his head out while preparing for the matriculation examen. But by slow and constant effort he succeeded in forcing a sufficient quantity of knowledge into his pores, and retaining it there, to enable him to pass the very best-deserved first-class that ever was won. The passage of the Alps to a Hannibal or a Napoleon was a puny feat compared with the passing of an examination by a Wetherhead. We took him on our shoulders, and bore him aloft in triumph, a banner-bearer, with a towel for banner, marching at the head of the procession. "You may laugh, but it was the towels pulled me through, old fellow," he said to me, smiling, his great face expanding with delight. "Stay there, and don't go any farther, Leathers," I advised, when he proclaimed his intention of going up for the degrees. "Nonsense!" saidhe, and, in spite of everybody's warnings, Wetherhead "went in" for the B.A. It was a sight to see him in the agonies of study; his eyes almost starting out of his head as the day wore on, and around that head, arranged in turban fashion, an enormous towel reeking with moisture. "How many towels to-day, Leathers?" "How's the reservoir, Leatherhead?" those impudent youngsters would cry out. As time went on and the examination drew near the whole college became interested in Wetherhead and his prospects of success. Bets were made on him, and bets were made on his towels. The wit of our class wrote an essay-which, it was whispered aloud, had reached the professors'

room, and been read aloud there to their intense amusement-on "Towels vs. Degrees; or, The probabilities of success, measured by the quantity of water on the brain." He bore it all good-humoredly, even the threat to crown him with towels instead of laurel if he passed and went up for his degree. A dark whisper reached me, away in the country at the time, that he had failed, that the failure had touched his brain, and that he was cut down half-strangled one morning from his own door-key, to which he had suspended himself by means of a wet towel; which, instead of its usual position around his brow, had fastened itself around his throat. Of course that was a malicious libel: for I met the poor fellow soon after. looking the ghost of himself. "How was it, Wetherhead?" I asked. "I don't know, old fellow," he responded mournfully. "I got through splendidly the first few days; but after that things began to get muddled and mixed up somehow, so that I could hardly tell one from another. It was all there, but something had got out of order. I felt that it was all there, but there was too much to hold together. The fact is, I missed my towel. towel or two would have set it all right again. The machine had got too hot, and wanted a little cooling off; but I couldn't march in there, you know, with a big towel round my head; so I failed."

The clock striking twelve woke me from my dream of school-days. I had just sixteen hours and a half left to complete the story that was not yet begun. Whew! I might as well engage to write a history of science within the appointed time. It was useless. My cigar had gone out, and I gave up the idea of writing a story at all. And yet surely

it was so easy, and I had promised Culpepper, and both he and *The Packet* and the public were awaiting my decision. And this was to be the end of what I had deemed the dawn of my hope and the firstling of my true genius!

"Roger Herbert, you are an ass," spake a voice I knew well-a voice that compelled my attention at the most unseasonable hours. "Excuse me for my plainness of speech, but you are emphatically an ass. Now, now, no bluster, no anger. If you and I cannot honestly avow the plain truth to each other, there is no hope for manhood. Mr. Culpepper and the public waiting for you! Ho! ho! Ha! ha! It's a capital joke. Mr. Culpepper is at this moment in the peaceful enjoyment of his first slumbers; and the public would not even know your name if it were told them. Upon my word, Roger, you are even a greater ass than I took you to be. Well, well, we live and learn. For the last half-a-dozen hours or more where have you been? Floating in the clouds; full of the elixir of life; dreaming great dreams, your spirit within you fanned with the movement of the divinus afflatus, eh? Is not that it? Nonsense, my dear lad. You have only once again mounted those two-foot stilts, against which I am always warning you, and which any little mountebank can manage better than you. They may show some skill, but you only tumble. come down at once, my fine fellow, and tread on terra firma again, where alone you are safe. You a genius! Ho! ho! Ho! ho! ho! And all apropos of a Christmas pudding. The genius of a Christmas pudding! It is too good. Your proper business, when Mr. Culpepper made his proposal to you this afternoon, was to tell him honestly that the task he set you was one quite beyond your strength-altogether out of your reach, in fact. But no; you must mount your stilts, and, once on them, of course you are a head and shoulders above honest folk. O Roger, Roger! why not remember your true stature? What is the use of a man of five foot four trying to palm himself off and give himself the airs of one of six foot four? He is only laughed at for his pains, as Mr. Culpepper will assuredly laugh at you to-morrow. Take my advice, dear boy, acknowledge your fault, and then go to bed. You are no genius, Roger. In what, pray, are you better, in what are you so good, as fifty of your acquaintances, whom I could name right off for you, but who never dream that they are geniuses? The divinus afflatus, for sooth! For shame, for shame, little man! Stick to your last, my friend, and be thankful even that you have a last whereto to stick. Let Apelles alone, or let the other little cobblers carp at him, if they will. The world will think more of his blunders than of all your handicraft put together, and your little cobbler criticisms into the bargain. And now, having said my say, I wish you a very good-night, Roger, or good-morning rather."

So spake the voice of the Daimon within me; a very bitter voice it has often proved to me—as bitter, but as healthy, as a tonic. And at its whisper down tumbled all "the cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces" that my imagination had so swiftly conjured up. It was somewhat humiliating to confess, but, after all, Roger Herbert, Senior, as I called that inner voice, was right. I resolved to go to bed. Full of that practical purpose, I went to my desk to close it up for the night, and all dreams of a

momentary ambition with it, when not a hint at pain in it! And I my eyes fell upon a letter bearing have been puzzling my brains these the address:

ROGER HERBERT, ESQ.,
Care of Mrs. Jinks,
—— Street,
New York,
United States,
America.

What a quantity of writing for so small an envelope! One needed no curious peep within, nor scarcely a second glance at the neatpointed hand, with the up-and-down strokes of equal thickness, to guess at the sex of the writer. I remembered now: it was the letter Mrs. Jinks gave me at the door, and, good heavens! it had been lying there disregarded all these hours, while I was inflated with my absurd and bombastic thoughts. writing I knew well, for my hand had been the first to guide the writer through the mazes and the mysteries of chirography. One sentence from the letter is sufficient to give here. "Dear, dear Roger: Papa is sick—is dying. Come home at once." It was signed "Fairy."

"Home at once!" The postmarks said London and Leighstone. London, it may be necessary to inform the reader, is the capital of a county called Middlesex, in a country called England, while Leighstone is a small country town some thirty miles out of London. From Leighstone writes "Fairy" to "Dear, dear Roger" some thousand-it seems fifty thousandodd miles away. The father reported dying is my father; Fairy is my sister. It is now nearly two in the morning, and by four in the afternoon Mr. Culpepper and the printers expect that brisk, pleasant, old-fashioned Christmas story that is to make everybody happy, and have been puzzling my brains these long hours past trying to compose it, with that silent letter staring me in the face all the time. A pleasant Christmas story, a cheery Christmas story! How bitterly that voice began to laugh within me again! Oh! the folly, the crime, of which I had been guilty. It was such vain and idle dreams as these that had lured me away from that father's side; that had brought me almost to forget him; that, great God! perhaps had dealt the blow that struck him down. Merciful heavens! what a Christmas story will it be mine to tell?

At four in the afternoon a steamer sailed for Liverpool, and I was one of the passengers. Years have passed since then, and I can write all this calmly enough now; but only those-and God grant that they may be few!-who at a moment's warning, or at any warning, have had to cross more than a thousand miles of ocean in the hope of catching a dying parent's last breath, can tell how the days pall and the sleepless nights drag on; how the sky expands into a mighty shroud covering one dear object, of which the sad eyes never lose the sight: how the winds, roar they loud or sing they softly, breathe ever the same low, monotonous dirge.

It was scarcely a year since I had parted from my father, and our parting had not been of the friendliest. He was a magnate in Leighstone, as all the Herberts before him had been since Leighstone had a history. They were a tradition in the place; and though to be great there in these days did not mean what it once meant, and to the world outside signified very little indeed, yet what is so exacting or punctilious as the etiquette

of a petty court, what so precise and well preserved as its narrow traditions and customs? Time did not exist for Leighstone when a Herbert was not the foremost man there. The tomb of the Herberts was the oldest and grandest in the churchyard that held the ashes of whole generations of the Leighstone folk. There had been Crusading Herberts, and Bishops Herbert, Catholic and Protestant, Abbots Herbert, Justices Herbert, Herberts that had shared in councils of state, and Herberts that had been hanged, drawn, and quartered by order of Old townsfolk would the state. bring visitors to the churchyard and give in their own way the history of "that ere Harbert astretched out atop o' the twomb, wi' a swoord by his soide, and gluvs on his hands, the two on 'em folded one aginst t'other a-prayin' loike, and a cross on his buzzum, and a coople o' angels wi' stone wings a-watchin' each side o' 'im. A had fowt in the waars long ago, that ere Harbert had, when gentle-folk used to wear steel coats, a used, and iron breeches, and go ever so fur over the seas to foight. Queer toimes them was. Whoi, the Harberts, folks did say, was the oldest fam'ly i' the country. Leastwoise, there was few 'uns older."

My father was possessed with the greatness of his ancestry, and resented the new-fangled notions that professed to see nothing in blood or history. Nurtured on tradition of a past that would never reappear, he speedily retired from a world where he was too eager to see that a Herbert was no more than a Jones or a Smith, and, though gifted with powers that, rightly used, might have proved, even in these days, that there was more in his race than tradition of a faded

past, he preferred withdrawing into that past to reproducing it in a manner accommodated to the new order of things. In all other respects he was a very amiable English gentleman, who, abjuring politics, which he held had degenerated into a trade unbecoming a gentleman's following, divided his time between antiquarian and agricultural pursuits, for neither of which did I exhibit so ardent an admiration as he had hoped. As soon as I could read, and think, and reason in my own way, I ran counter to my father in many things, and was pronounced by him to be a radical, infected with the dangerous doctrines of the day, which threatened the overthrow of all things good, and the advent of all things evil. He only read in history the records of a few great families. For me the families were of far less interest than the peoples, historically at least. The families had already passed or were passing away; the peoples always remained. To the families I attributed most of the evils that had afflicted humanity; in the peoples I found the stuff that from time to time helped to regenerate humanity. do not say that all this came to me at once; but this manner of looking at things grew upon me, and made my father anxious about my future, though he was too kind to place any great restrictions in the way of my pursuits, and our disputes would generally end by the injunction: "Roger, whatever you do or think, always remember that you represent a noble race, and are by your very birth an English gentleman, so long as such a being is permitted to exist."

As I grew older problems thickened around me, and I often envied the passive resignation with which so spirited a temperament as my father's could find refuge from the exciting questions of the day in the quiet of his books and favorite pursuits. Coming home from college or from an occasional excursion into the great world without, Leighstone would seem to me a hermitage, where life was extinct, and there was room for nothing save meditation. And there I meditated much, and pondered and read, as I then thought, deeply. The quaint, old churchyard was my favorite ground for colloquy with myself, and admirably adapted, with its generations of silent dead, was it for the purpose. In that very tomb lay bones, once clothed with flesh, through which coursed lustily blood that had filtered down through the ages into my veins. In my thoughts I would question that quiet old Herbert stretched out there on his tomb centuries ago, and lying so still, with his calm, stony face upturned immovably and confidently to heaven. The face was not unlike my father's: Leighstone folk said it was still more like mine. That Herbert was a Catholic, and believed earnestly in all that I and my father as earnestly disbelieved. Was he the worse or the better man for his faith? To what had his faith led him, and to what had ours led us? What was his faith, and what was ours? To us he was a superstitious creature, born in dark ages, and the victim of a cunning priestcraft, that, in the name of heaven, darkened the minds and hearts of men; while, had he dreamed that a degenerate child of his would ever, even in after-ages, turn heretic, as he would say, the probabilities were that in his greathearted earnestness, had it rested solely with him, he would rather

have ended the line in his own person than that such disgrace should ever come upon it. The man who in his day had dared tell him that flesh of his would ever revile the church in which he believed, and the Sacrament which he adored, would likely enough have been piously knocked on the head for his pains. What a puzzle it all was! Could a century or two make all this difference in the manner of regarding the truths on which men professed to bind their hopes of an eternal hereafter?

One afternoon of one of those real English summer days that when they come are so balmy and bright and joyous, while sauntering through the churchyard, I lighted upon a figure half buried in the long grass, so deeply intent on deciphering the inscription around the tomb of my ancestor that he did not notice my approach. There he lay, his hat by his side, and an open sketch-book near it, peering into the dim, old, half-effaced characters as curiously as ever did alchemist of eld into an old black-letter volume. His years could not be many more than mine. His form would equally attract the admiration of a lady or a prize-fighter. The sign of ruddy health burned on the bronzed cheek. The dress had nothing particular in it to stamp the character of the wearer. The sketch-book and his absorbing interest in the grim old characters around a tomb might denote the enthusiasm of an artist, or of an antiquarian like my father, though he looked too full of the robust life of careless youth for the one, and too evidently in the enjoyment of life as it was for the other. Altogether a man that, encountered thus in a country churchyard on a warm July afternoon, would at once excite

the interest and attract the attention

of a passer-by.

While I was mentally noting down, running up, and calculating to a nicety the sum of his qualities, the expression of his face indicated that he was engaged in a hopeless task. "I can make all out about the old Crusader except the date, and that is an all-important point. The date—the date—the date," he repeated to himself aloud. "I wonder what Crusade he fought in?"

"Perhaps I could assist you," I broke in. "Sir Roger Herbert followed the good King Edward to the Holy Land, and for the sake of Christ's dear rood made many a proud painim to bite the dust. So saith the old chronicle of the Abbey of S. Wilfrid which you see still standing—the modernized version of it, at least—on yonder hill. The present abbot of S. Wilfrid is the florid gentleman who has just saluted me. That handsome lady beside him is the abbot's wife. two pretty girls seated opposite are the abbot's daughters. The good and gentle Abbot Jones is taking the fair abbess, Mrs. Jones, out for her afternoon airing. She is a very amiable lady; he is a very genial gentleman, and the author of the pamphlet in reply to Maitland's Dark Ages. Mr. Jones is very severe on the laziness and general good-for-nothingness of the poor monks.

My companion, who still remained stretched on the grass, scanned my face curiously and with an amused glance while I spoke. He seemed lost in a half-revery, from which he did not recover until a few moments after I had ceased speaking. With sudden recollection, he said:

"I beg your pardon, I was thinking of something else. Many thanks

for your information about this old hero, whom the new train of ideas, called up by your mention of the Abbot Jones and his family, drove out of my mind a moment. The Abbot Jones!" he laughed. "It is very funny. Yet why do the two words seem so little in keeping?"

"It is because, as my father would tell you, this is the century of the Joneses. Centuries ago Abbot Jones would have sounded just as well and as naturally as did Queen Joan. But, in common with many another good thing, the name has become vulgarized by a vulgar age."

My companion glanced at me curiously again, and seemed more inwardly amused than before, whether with me or at me, or both, it was impossible to judge from his countenance, though that was open enough. He turned from the abbot to the tomb again.

"And so this old hero," said he, patting affectionately the peaked toe of the figure of Sir Roger, "drew his sword long ago for Christ's dear rood, and probably scaled the walls of Damietta at the head of a lusty band. What a doughty old fellow he must have been! I should have been proud to have shaken hands with him."

"Should you, indeed? Then perhaps you will allow a remote relative of that doughty old fellow to act as his unworthy representative in his absence?" said I, offering my hand.

"Why, you don't mean to say that you are a descendant of the old knight whose ashes consecrate this spot!" he exclaimed, rising and grasping me by the hand. "Sir, I am happy to lay my hand in that of a son of a Crusader!"

"I fear I may not claim so high

a character. There are no Crusaders left. Myself, and Sir Roger here, move in different circles. You forget that a few centuries roll between us."

"Centuries change the fashion of men's garments," he responded quickly, "not the fashion of their hearts. Truth is truth, and faith faith, and honor honor, now as when this warrior fought for faith, and truth, and honor. The crusades end only with the cross and faith in Christ."

So spake with fervent accent and kindling glance the gentleman whom a few moments before I had set down as one eminently fitted to attract the admiration alike of lady or prize-fighter. The words struck me as so strange, spoken in such a place and by such a person, that I was silent a little, and he also. At length I said:

"You are like my father. You seem to prefer the old to the new."

"Not so: I am particularly grateful that I was born in this and in no other century. But I object to the enthusiasm that would leave all the dead past to bury its dead. There were certain things, certain qualities in the centuries gone by, a larger faith, a more general fervor, a loyalty to what was really good and great, more universal than prevails to-day, that we might have preserved with benefit to ourselves and to generations to come. But pardon me. You have unfortunately hit upon one of my hobbies, and I could talk for hours on the subiect."

"On the contrary, I ought to feel flattered at finding one interested even in so remote a relative of mine as Sir Roger. As I look at him this moment the thought comes to me, could he bend those stiff old knees of his, hardened by the cen-

turies into triple stone, rise up and walk through Leighstone, live a week among us, question us, know our thoughts, feelings, aspirations, religions, ascertain all that we have profited by the centuries that have rolled over this tomb, he would, after one week of it all, gather his old joints together and go back to his quiet rest until that

Tuba mirum spargens sonum Per sepulchra regionum Coget omnes ante thronum.

"I can't help laughing at the conceit, Imagine me escorting this stiff and stony old Sir Roger through the streets of Leighstone, and introducing him to my relations and friends as my grandfather some six centuries removed. But the fancy sounds irreverent to one whom I doubt not was as loyal-hearted a gentleman as ever clove a Turk to the chine. Poor old Sir Roger! I must prevent Mattock making such constant use of his elbow. It is getting quite out of repair."

"Who is Mattock, may I ask?"

"Mattock is a character in his way. He is the Leighstone gravedigger, and has been as long as I can remember. He claims a kind of fellowship with those he buries, and he has buried a whole generation of Leighstonites, till a contagious hump has risen on his back from the number of mounds he has. raised. He is a cynic in his way, and can be as philosophic over a. skull as Hamlet in the play. Hehas a wonderful respect, almost a superstitious regard, for Sir Roger... Whenever he strips for a burial, he commends his goods to the care of my ancestor, accompanied always. by the same remark: 'I wonder who laid thee i' the airth? weighty corpse thou, a warrant. A deep grave thine, old stone-beard.

Well, lend's your elbow, and here's to ye, wherever ye may be.' Mattock takes special care to fortify himself against possible contingencies with a dram. 'Cold corpses,' he says, 'is unhealthy. They are apt to lie heavy on the stomick, if ye doant guard agin 'em; corpses doos. So doos oysters. A dram afore burial and another dram after keeps off the miasmys.' Such is Mattock's opinion, backed up by an experience of a quarter of a century. You are evidently a stranger in this neighborhood?"

"Yes, I was merely passing through. I am enjoying a walking tour, being a great walker. It is by far the best method of seeing a country. When in the course of my wanderings I come across an old tomb such as this, an old inscription, or anything at all that was wrought or writ by reverent hands centuries ago, and has survived through the changes of time, I am amply repaid for a day's march. Doubly so in this instance, since it has been the fortunate means of bringing me in contact with one whose opinions I am happy to think run in many things parallel with my own. And now to step out of the past into the very vulgar present, I am staying at the 'Black Bull.' The 'Black Bull,' I am assured, is famous for his larder, so that, if you feel inclined to ripen the acquaintance begun by the grave of your ancestor, in the interior of the 'Black Bull,' Kenneth Goodal will consider that he has fallen on an exceptionally happy day."

"Kenneth Goodal?" The name struck me as familiar; but I could not recollect at the moment where I had heard it before. I repeated it aloud.

"It sounds quite a romantic name, does it not? It was my absurd mother who insisted on the Kenneth, after a Scotch uncle of mine. For that matter I suppose it was she who also insisted on the Goodal. At least my father says But she is the sweetest of women to have her own way. Heaven bless her! Of course I had no voice in the matter at all, beyond the generic squeal of babyhood. Had I been consulted, I should have selected Jack, a jolly, roughand-ready title. It carries a sort of slap-me-on-the-back sound with it. One is never surprised at a Tack getting into scrapes or getting out of them. But it would cause very considerable surprise to hear that a Kenneth had been caught in any wild enterprise. However, Kenneth I am, and Kenneth I must remain, as staid and respectable as a policeman on duty by very force of title."

"Now I remember where I heard the name. There were traditions at Dr. Porteous', at Kingsclere, of a Kenneth Goodal who had just left before I went there. But he can't have been you."

"No? Why not?"

"He was an awful scape-grace, they told me. He used to play all kinds of tricks on the masters, though as great a favorite with them as with the boys. He was a great mimic, and Dr. Porteous, who is as solemn as an undertaker at a rich man's funeral, and as pompous as a parish beadle, surprised Kenneth Goodal one day, surrounded by a delighted crowd, listening with such rapt attention to a highly wrought discourse, after the doctor's best manner, on the history and philosophy of Resurrection Pie, that it required the unmistakable 'ahem!' of the doctor at the close to announce to actor and audience the presence of the original. The doctor in the grand oldschool manner congratulated the vouthful Roscius on talents of whose existence he had been hitherto unaware, and hinted that a repetition of so successful a performance might encourage him to seek a wider field for so promising a pu-And when the same Kenneth thrashed the Kingsclere Champion for beating one of the youngsters, bribing the policeman not to interfere until he had finished him, the doctor, who was a model of decorum, had him up before the whole college, and delivered an address that is not quite forgotten to this day; acknowledging the credit to the establishment of such a champion in their midst; a young gentleman who could mimic his superiors until his identity was lost, and pummel his inferiors until their identity was lost, was wasting his great natural gifts in so narrow an arena: and so on - all delivered in the doctor's best Ciceronian style. took a deputation of all the masters and all the boys together to beg the delinquent off a rustication or worse. In fact, the stories of him and his deeds are endless. How odd that you should have the same name!"

My new acquaintance laughed outright.

"I fear I must lay claim to more than the name; that historical personage stands before you. I was with Dr. Porteous for a couple of years, and had no idea that I left such fame behind me. The doctor and I became the best of friends after my departure. And so you and I are, in a manner, old school-fellows? How happy I am to have fallen across you. But, come; the 'Black Bull' is waiting."

"By the elbow of mine ancestor, nay. Such dishonor may not come

upon the Herberts. Why, Sir Roger here would rise from his tomb at the thought and denounce me in the market-place. You must come with me. Dinner is ready by this time. Come as you are. My father will like you. He likes any one who is interested in his ancestors. And my sister, who, since my mother's death, is mistress of the house and mistress of us all, shall answer for herself."

"So be it," he said, and we passed under the yews, their sad branches flushed in the sun, out through the gate, under the old archway with its mouldering statues, up the pretty straggling road that formed the High Street of Leighstone, arm in arm together, fast friends we each of us felt, though but acquaintances of an hour. The instinct that out of a multitude selects one, though you may scarcely know his name, and tells you that one is your friend, is as strange as unerring. It was this unconscious necromancy that had woven a mesh of golden threads caught from the summer sunlight around us as we moved along. Its influence was upon us, breathing in the perfumed air. I had never had a real friend of my own age before, and I hailed this one as the discovery of a life-time. We should strike out together, tread the same path, be it rough or smooth, arm in arm until the end come. Damon and Pythias would be nothing to The same loves, the same hates, the same hopes, were to guide, animate, and sustain us. Castles in the air! Castles in the air! Who has not built them? Who among the sons of men in the neighborhood of twenty summers has not chosen one man out of thousands, leant upon him, cherished him, made him his idol, loved

him above all? And so it goes on, until some day comes a laughing eye peeping from under a bonnet, and with one dart the bosom friendship is smitten through and through, and Damon is ready to sacrifice a hecatomb of his Pythiases on the altar of the ox-eyed goddess.

CHAPTER II.

A DINNER AT THE GRANGE-A PAIR OF OWLS.

As we passed up the gravel walk of the Grange a face was trying its prettiest to look scoldingly out of the window, but could not succeed. When the eyes lighted upon my companion, face and eyes together disappeared. It was a face that I had seen grow under my eyes, but it had never occurred to me hitherto that it had grown so beautiful. Could that tall young lady, who did the duties of mistress of the Grange so demurely, be the little fairy whom only yesterday I used to toss upon my shoulder and carry out into the barnyard to see the fowls, one hand twined around my neck, and the other waving her magic wand with the action of a little queen—the same magic wand that I had spent a whole hour and a half-a boy's long hour and a half-in peeling and notching with my broken penknife, engraving thereon the cabalistic characters "F. N.," which, as all the world was supposed to know, signified "Fairy Nell"? And that was "Fairy" who had just disappeared from the honeysuckles. Faith! a far more dangerous fairy than when I was her war-horse and she my imperious queen.

I introduced my companion as an old school-fellow of mine to my father and sister. So fine-looking a young man could not fail to impress my father favorably, who, notwithstanding his seclusion, had a keen eye for persons and appearances. How so fine-looking a young man impressed my sister I cannot say, for it is not given to me to read ladies' hearts. The dinner was passing pleasantly enough, when one of those odd revulsions of feeling that come to one at times in the most inopportune situations came over me. I am peculiarly subject to fits of this nature, and only time and years have enabled me to overcome them to any extent. By the grave of a friend who was dear to me, and in presence of his weeping relatives, some odd recollection has risen up as it were out of the freshly-dug grave, and grinned at me over the corpse's head, till I hardly knew whether the tears in my eyes were brought there by laughter or by grief. Just on the attainment of some success. for which I had striven for months or years, may be, and to which I had devoted every energy that was in me, while the flush of it was fresh on my cheek and in my heart, and the congratulations of friends pouring in on me, has come a drear feeling like a winter wind across my summer garden to blast the roses and wither the dew-laden buds just opening to the light. Why this is so I cannot explain; that it is so I know. It is a mockery of human nature, and falls on the harmony of the soul like that terrible "ha! ha!" of the fiend who stands by all the while when poor Faust and innocent Marguerite are opening their hearts to each other.

"And so, Mr. Goodal, you are an old friend of Roger's? He has told me about most of his friends. It is strange he never mentioned your name before."

"It is strange," I broke in hurriedly. "Kenneth is the oldest of all, too. I found him first in the thirteenth century. He bears his years well, does he not, Fairy?"

My father and Nellie both looked perplexed. Kenneth laughed.

"What in the world are you talking about, Roger?" asked my father in amazement.

"Where do you think I found him? Burrowing at the tomb of the Herberts, as though he were anxious to get inside and pass an evening with them."

"And judging the past by the present, a very agreeable evening I should have spent," said Kenneth

"Well, sir, I will not deny that you would have found excellent company," responded my father, pleased at the compliment. "The Herberts..." he began.

"For heaven's sake, sir, let them rest in their grave. I have already surfeited Mr. Goodal with the history of the Herberts." Kenneth was about to interpose, but I went on: "A strangely-mixed assembly the Herberts would make in the other world; granting that there is another world, and that the mem-

bers of our family condescend to know each other there."

"Roger!" said Nellie in a warning tone, while my father reddened and shifted uneasily in his chair.

"If there be another world and the Herberts are there, it is impossible that they can live together en famille. It can scarcely be even a bowing acquaintance," I added, feeling all the while that I was as rude and undutiful as though I had risen from my chair and dealt my father a blow in the face. He remembered, as I did not, what was due to our guest, and said coldly:

"Roger, don't you think that you might advantageously change the subject? Mr. Goodal, I am very far behind the age, and not equal to what I suppose is the prevailing tone among clever young gentlemen of the present day. I am very old fogy, very conservative. Try that sherry."

The quiet severity of his tone cut me to the quick. The spirit of mischief must have been very near my elbow at that moment. Instead of taking my lesson in good part, I felt like a whipped schoolboy, and, regardless of poor Nellie's pale face and Kenneth's silence, went on resolutely:

"Well, sir, my ancestors are to me a most interesting topic of conversation, and I take it that a Herbert only shows a proper regard for his own flesh and blood if he inquire after their eternal no less than their temporal welfare. What has become of all the Herberts, I should dearly like to know?"

"I know, sir, what will become of one of them, if he continues his silly and unmannerly cynicism," said my father, now fairly aroused. He was very easily aroused, and I wonder that he restrained himself

so long. "I cannot imagine, Mr. Goodal, what possesses the young men of the present day, or what they are coming to. Irreverence for the dead, irreverence for the living, irreverence for all that is worthy of reverence, seems to stamp their character. I trust, sir, indeed I believe, that you have better feelings than to think that life and death, here and hereafter, are fit subjects for a boy's sneer. I am sure that you have that respect for church and state and-and things established that is becoming a gentleman. I can only regret that my son is resolved on going as fast as he can to-to-" He glanced at Nellie, and remained silent.

"I know where you would say, sir; and in the event of my happy arrival there, I shall beyond doubt meet a large section of the Herberts who have gone before me—that is, if church and things established are to be believed. When one comes to think of it, what an appalling number of Herberts must have

gone to the devil!"

"Nellie, my girl, you had better retire, since your brother forgets how to conduct himself in the presence of ladies and gentlemen."

But Nellie sat still with scared face, and, though by this time my heart ached, I could not help con-

tinuing:

"But, father, what are we to believe, or do we believe anything? Up to a certain period the Herberts were what their present head—whom heaven long preserve!—would call rank Papists. Old Sir Roger, whose epitaph I found Mr. Goodal endeavoring to decipher this afternoon, was a Crusader, a soldier of the cross which; in our enlightenment and hatred of idolatry, we have torn down from the altar where he worshipped, and overturned that

altar itself. Was it for love of church and things established, as we understand them, that he sailed away to the Holy Land, and in his pious zeal knocked the life out of many an innocent painim? Was good Abbot Herbert, whose monumental brass in the chancel of S. Wilfrid's presents him kneeling and adoring before the chalice that he verily believed to hold the blood of Christ, a worshipper of the same God and a holder of the same faith as my uncle, Archdeacon Herbert, who denies and abhors the doctrine of Transubstantiation, although his two daughters, who are of the highest High-Church Anglicans, devoutly believe in something approaching it, and, to prove their faith, have enrolled themselves both in the Confraternity of the Cope, whose recent discovery has set Parliament and all the bench of bishops abuzz? Is it all a humbug all the way down, or were the stout, Crusading, Catholic Herberts real and right, while we are wrong and a religious sham? Does the Reformation mark us off into white sheep and black sheep, consigning them to hell and us to heaven? If not, why were they not Protestants, and why are we not Catholics, or why are we all not unbelievers? Can the same heaven hold all alike-those who adored and adore the Sacrament as God, and those who pronounce adoration of the Sacrament idolatry and an abomination?"

My father's only reply to this lengthy and irresistible burst of eloquent reasoning was to ask Nellie, who had sat stone-still, and whose eyes were distended in mingled horror and wonder, for a cup of coffee. My long harangue seemed to have a soothing effect upon my nerves. I looked at Goodal, who was looking at his spoon. I

felt so sorry that I could have wished all my words unsaid.

"My dear father, and my dear Kenneth, and you too, Nellie, pardon me. I have been unmannerly, grossly so. I brought you here, Kenneth, to spend a pleasant evening, and help us to spend one, and some evil genius-a daimon that I carry about with me, and cannot always whip into good behavior-has had possession of me for the last half-hour. It was he that spoke in me, and not my father's son, who, were he true to the lessons and example of his parent, would as soon think of committing suicide as a breach of hospitality or good manners. as you are antiquarians, I leave vou a little to compare notes, while I take Fairy out to trip upon the green, and console her for my passing heresy with orthodoxy and Tupper, who, I need not assure you, is her favorite poet, as he is of all true English country damsels. There is the moon beginning to rise; and there is a certain melting, a certain watery, quality about Tupper admirably adapted to moonlight."

The rest of the evening passed more pleasantly. After a little we all went out on the lawn, and sat there together. The moonlight nights of the English summer are very lovely. That night was as a thousand such, yet it seemed to me that I had never felt the solemn beauty of nature so deeply or so sensibly before. S. Wilfrid's shone out high and gray and solemn in the moon. Through the yew-trees of the priory down below gleamed the white tombstones of the churchyard. A streak of silver quivering through the land marked the wandering course of the Leigh. high up among the beeches and the elms sat we, the odors of the

afternoon still lingering on the air, the melody of a nightingale near by wooing the heart of the night with its mystic notes, and the moonlight shimmering on drowsy trees and slumbering foliage that not a breath in all the wide air stirred.

"There is a soft quiet in our English nights, a kind of home feeling about them, that makes them very lovable, and that I have experienced nowhere else," said Kenneth.

"Oh! I am so glad to hear you say that, Mr. Goodal."

"May I ask why, Miss Herbert?"

"Well, I hardly know. Because, I suppose, I am so very English."

"So is Tupper, and Fairy swears by Tupper. At least she would, if she swore at all," remarked her brother, whose hair was pulled for his pains.

"Were you ever abroad, Miss Herbert?"

"Never; papa wished to take me often, but I refused, because I suppose again I am so very English."

"Too English to face sea-sick-ness," said her brother.

"I believe the fault is mine, Mr. Goodal," said her father. "You see the gout never leaves me for long together. I am liable at any time to an attack; and gout is a bad companion on foreign travel. It is bad enough at home, as Nellie finds, who insists on being my only nurse; and I am so selfish that I have not the heart to let her go, and I believe she has hardly the heart to leave me."

"Oh! I don't wish to go. Cousin Edith goes every year, and we have such battles when she comes back. She cannot endure this climate, she cannot endure the people, she cannot endure the fashions, the language is too harsh and grating for her ear, the cooking is barbarous—everything is bad. Now, I would rather stay at home and be happy in my ignorance than learn such lessons as that," said honest Nellie.

"You would never learn such lessons."

"Don't you think so? But tell us now, Mr. Goodal, do not you, who have seen so much, find England very dull?"

"Excessively. That is one of its chief beauties. Dulness is one of our national privileges; and Roger here will tell you we pride

ourselves on it."

"Kenneth would say that dulness is only another word for what you would call our beautiful homelife," said the gentleman appealed to.

"Dulness indeed! I don't find it dull," broke in Nellie, bridling up.

"No, the dairy and the kitchen; the dinner and tea; the Priory on a Sunday; the shopping excursions into Leighstone, where there is nothing to buy; the garden and the vinery; the visits to Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Knowles; to Widow Wickham, who is blind: to Mrs. Staynes, who is deaf, and whose husband ran away from her because, as he said, he feared that he would rupture a blood-vessel in trying to talk to her; the parish school and the charity hospital, make the life of a well-behaved young English lady quite a round of excitement. There are such things, too, as riding to hounds, and a ball once in a while, and croquet parties, and picnics, and the Eleusinian mysteries of the teatable. Who shall say that, with all these opportunities for wild dissipation, English country life is dull?"

"Roger wearies of Leighstone, you perceive," said my father.

"Well, I was restless once myself; but the gout laid hold of me early in life, and it has kept its hold."

"Now, Mr. Goodal, in all your wanderings, tell me where you have seen anything so delightful as this? Have you seen a ruin more venerable than S. Wilfrid's, nodding to sleep like a gray old monk on the top of the hill there? Every stone of it has a history; some of them gay, many of them grave. Look at the Priory nestling down belowhistory again. See how gently the Leigh wanders away through the country. Every cottage and farm on its banks I know, and those in them. Could you find a sweeter perfume in all the world than steals up from my own garden here, where all the flowers are mine, and I sometimes think half know me? All around is beauty and peace, and has been so ever since I was a child. Why, then, should I wish to wander?'

Something more liquid even than their light glistened in Fairy's eyes, as she turned them on Kenneth at the close. He seemed startled at her sudden outburst, and, after a moment, said almost gravely:

"You are right, Miss Herbert. The beauty that we do not know we may admire, but hardly love. It is like a painting that we glance at, and pass on to see something else. There is no sense of ownership about it. I have wandered, with a crippled friend by my side, through art galleries where all that was beautiful in nature and art was drawn up in a way to fascinate the eye and delight the senses. my crippled friend never suffered by contrast; never felt his deformity there. Knowledge, association, friendship, love-these are the great beautifiers. The little that we can really call our own is dearer to us than all the world-is our world, in An Italian sunset steals and enwraps the senses into, as it were. a third heaven. A London fog is one of the most hideous things in this world; yet a genuine Londoner finds something in his native fog dear to him as the sunset to the Italian, and I confess to the barbarism myself. On our arrival the. other day we were greeted by a yellow, dense, smoke-colored fog, such as London alone can produce. It was more than a year since I had seen one, and I enjoyed it. breathed freely again, for I was at home. You will understand, then, how I appreciate your enthusiasm about Leighstone; and if Leighstone had many like Miss Herbert, I can well understand why its people should be content to stay at home."

Nellie laughed. "I am afraid, Mr. Goodal, that you have brought back something more than your taste for fogs and your homely

Saxon from Italy."

"Yes, a more rooted love for my own land, a truer appreciation of my countrymen, and more ardent admiration of my fair countrywomen."

"Ah! now you are talking Italian. But, honestly, which country do you find the most interesting of all you have seen?"

"My own, Miss Herbert."

"The nation of shop-keepers!"

ejaculated I.

"Of Magna Charta," interposed my father, who, ready enough to condemn his age and his country himself, was Englishman enough to allow no other person to do so with impunity.

"Of hearth and home, of cheerful firesides and family circles,"

added Nellie.

"Of work-houses and tread-mills," I growled.

"Of law and order, of civil and religious liberty," corrected my father.

"Which are of very recent introduction and very insecure tenure," added I.

"They formed the corner-stone of the great charter on which our English state is built—a charter that has become our glory and the world's envy."

"To be broken into and rifled within a century; to be set under the foot of a Henry VIII. and pinned to the petticoat of an Elizabeth: to be mocked at in the death of a Mary, Queen of Scots, and a Charles: to be thrown out of window by a Cromwell. Our charters and our liberties! Oh! we are a thrifty race. We can pocket them all when it suits our convenience, and flaunt them to the world on exhibition-days. Our charter did not save young Raymond Herbert his neck for sticking to his faith during the Reformation, though I believe that same charter provided above all things that the church of God should be free; and a Chief-Justice Herbert sat on the bench and pronounced sentence on the boy, not daring to wag a finger in defence of his own flesh and blood. Of course the Catholic Church was not the church of God, for so the queen's majesty decreed; and to Chief-Justice Herbert we owe these lands, such of them as were saved. Great heaven! we talk of nobility -English nobility; the proudest race under the sun. The proudest race under the sun, who would scorn to kiss the Pope's slipper, grovelled in the earth, one and all of them, under the heel of an Elizabeth, and the other day trembled at the frown of a George the Fourth!"

I need not dwell on the fact that in those days I had a particular fundness for the sound of my own voice. I gloried in what seemed to me startling paradoxes, and flashes of wisdom that loosened bolts and rivets of prejudice, shattered massive edifices of falsehood, undermined in a twinkling social and moral weaknesses, which, of course, had waited in snug security all these long years for my coming to expose them to the scorn of a wondering world. What a hero I was, what a trenchant manner I had of putting things, what a keen intellect lay concealed under that calm exterior, and what a deep debt the world would have owed me had it only listened in time to my Cassandra warnings, it will be quite unnecessary for me to point

"I suppose I ought to be very much ashamed of myself," said Kenneth good-humoredly; "but I still confess that I find my own country the most interesting of any that I have seen. It may be that the very variety, the strange contradictions in our national life and character, noticed by our radical here, are in themselves no small cause for that interest. If we have had a Henry VIII., we have had an Alfred and an Edward: if we have had an Elizabeth, we have also had a Maud; if our nobles cowered before a woman, they faced a man at Runnymede, and at their head were English churchmen, albeit not English churchmen of the stamp of to-day. If we broke through our charter, let us at least take the merit of having restored something of it, although it is somewhat mortifying to find that centuries of wandering and of history and discovery only land us at our old starting-point."

"I give in. Bah! we are spoiling the night with history, while all

nature is smiling at us in her beautiful calm."

"Ah! you have driven away the nightingale; it sings no more," said Fairy.

"Surely some one can console us for its absence," said Kenneth, glancing at Nellie.

"I do not understand Italian,"

she laughed back.

"Your denial is a confession of guilt. I heard Roger call you Fairy. There be good fairies and bad. You would not be placed among the bad?"

"Why not?"

"Because all the bad fairies are old."

"And ride on broomsticks," added I.

Unlike her brother, who had not a note of music in him, Fairy had a beautiful voice, which had had the additional advantage of a very careful cultivation. She sang us a simple old ballad that touched our hearts; and when that was done, Then the we insisted on another. very trees seemed to listen, the flowers to open as to a new sunlight, and shed their sweetness in sympathy, as she sang one of those ballads of sighs and tears, hope and despair and sorrowful lamentation. caught from the heart of a nation whose feelings have been stirred to the depths to give forth all that was in them in the beautiful music that their poet has wedded to words. The ballad was "The Last Rose of Summer," and as the notes died away the foliage seemed to move and murmur with applause, while after a pause the nightingale trilled out again its wonderful song in rivalry. There was silence for a short time, which was broken by Kenneth say-

"I must break up Fairy-lar.d, and go back to the Black Bull."

But of this we would not hear. It was agreed that Kenneth should take up his quarters with us. The conversation outlasted our usual nours at Leighstone. Kenneth sustained the burden; and with a wonderful grace and charm he did so. He had read as well as travelled, and more deeply and extensively than is common with men of his years; for his conversation was full of that easy and delightful illustration that only a student whose sharp angles have been worn off by contact with the world outside his study can command and gracefully use, leaving the gem of knowledge that a man possesses, be it small or great, perfect in its setting. Much of what he related was relieved by some shrewd and happy remark of his own that showed him a close observer, while a genial good-nature and tendency to take the best possible view of things diffused itself through all. It was late when my father said:

"Mr. Goodal, you have tempted me into inviting an attack of my old enemy by sitting here so long. There is no necessity for your going to-morrow, is there, since you are simply on a walking tour? Roger is a great rambler, and there are many pretty spots about Leighstone, many an old ruin that will repay a visit. Indeed, ruins are the most interesting objects of these days. My walking days, I fear, are over. A visitor is a Godsend to us down here, and, though you ramblers soon tire of one spot, there is more in Leighstone than can be well seen in a day."

Thus pressed, he consented, and our little party broke up.

"Are you an owl!" I asked Kenneth, as my father and sister retired.

"Somewhat," he replied, smiling.

"Then come to my room, and you shall give your to-whoo to my to-whit. I was born an owl, having been introduced into this world, I am informed, in the small hours: and the habits of the species cling to me. Take that easy-chair and try this cigar. These slippers will ease your feet. Though not a drinking man, properly so called, I confess to a liking for the juice of the grape. The fondness for it is still strong in the sluggish blood of the Norse, and I cannot help my blood. Therefore, at an hour like this, a night-cap will not hurt us. Of what color shall it be? Of the deep claret tint of Bordeaux, the dark-red hue of Burgundy, or the golden amber of the generous Spaniard? Though, as I tell you, not a drinking man, I think a good cigar and a little wine vastly improves the moonlight, provided the quantity be not such as to obscure the vision of eye or brain. That is not exactly a theory of my own. It was constantly and deeply impressed upon me by a very reverend friend of mine, with whom I read for a year. Indeed I fear his faith in port was deeper than his faith in the Pentateuch. The drunkard is to me the lowest of animals, ever has been, and ever will be. Were the world ruled—as it is scarcely likely to be just yet-by my suggestions, the fate of the Duke of Clarence should be the doom of every drunkard, with only this difference: that each one be drowned in his own favorite liquor, soaked there till he dissolved. and the contents ladled out and poured down the throat of whoever, by any accident, mistook the gutter for his bed. You will pardon my air; in my own room I am supreme lord and master. Kenneth, my boy, I like you. I feel as though I

had known you all my life. That must have been the reason for my unruly, ungracious, and unmannerly explosion down-stairs at dinner. I have an uncontrollable habit of breaking out in that style sometimes, and the effect on my father, whom I need not tell you I love and revere above all men living, is what you see."

He smoked in silence a few seconds, and then, turning on me, suddenly asked:

"Where did you learn your theo-

logy?"

The question was the last in the world that would have presented itself to me, and was a little startling, but put in too earnest a manner for a sneer, and too kindly to give offence. I answered blandly that I was guiltless of laying claim to any special theology.

"Well, your opinions, then—the faith, the reasons, on which you ground your life and views of life. Your conversation at times drifts into a certain tone that makes me ask. Where or what have you

studied?"

"Nowhere; nothing; everywhere; everything; everybody; I read whatever I come across. And as for theology—for my theology, such as it is—I suppose I am chiefly indebted to that remarkably clever organ of opinion known as the Journal of the Age."

A few whiffs in silence, and then

he said:

"I thought so."

"What did you think?"

"That you were a reader of the Journal of the Age. Most youngsters who read anything above a sporting journal or a sensational novel are. I have been a student of it myself—a very close student. I knew the editor well. We were at one time bosom friends. He took me in training, and I recognized the symptoms in you at once."

"How so?"

"The Journal of the Age—and it has numerous admirers and imitators—is, in these days, the ablest organ of a great and almost universal worship of an awful trinity that has existed since man was first created; and the name of that awful trinity is—the devil, the world, and the flesh."

I stared at him in silent astonishment. All the gayety of his manner, all its softness, had gone, and he seemed in deadly earnest, as he went on:

"This worship is not paraded in its grossest form. Not at all. It is graced by all that wit can give and undisciplined intellect devise. It has a brilliant sneer for Faith, a scornful smile for Hope, and a chill politeness for Charity. I revelled in it for a time. Heaven forgive me! I was happy enough to escape."

"With what result?"

"Briefly with this: with the conviction that man did not make this world; that he did not make himself, or send himself into it; that consequently he was not and could never be absolutely his own master; that he was sent in and called out by Another, by a Greater than he, by a Creator, by a God. I became and am a Catholic, to find that what for a time I had blindly worshipped were the three enemies against whom I was warned to fight all the days of my life."

"And the Journal of the Age?"

"The editor cut me as soon as he found I believed in God in preference to himself. He is the fiercest opponent of Papal Infallibility with whom I ever had the honor of acquaintance."

"I cannot say that your words and the manner in which you speak them do not impress me. Still, it never occurred to me that so insignificant a being as Roger Herbert was worthy the combined attack of the three formidable adversaries you have named. What have the devil, the world, and the flesh to do with me?"

"Yes, there is the difficulty, not only with Roger Herbert, but with everybody else. It does seem strange that influences so powerful and mysterious should be for ever ranged against such wretched little beings as we are, whom a toothache tortures and a fever kills. surely man's life on earth is not all fever and its prevention, toothache and its cure, or a course of eating, doctoring, and tailoring. If we believe at all in a life that can never end, in a soul, surely that is something worth thought and care. eternal life that must range itself on one side or the other seems worthy of a struggle between the powers of good and evil, if good and evil there be. Nay, man is bound of his own right, of his own free will, of his very existence, to choose between one and the other, to be good or be bad, and not stumble on listlessly as a thing of chance, tossed at will from one to the other. We do not sufficiently realize the greatest of our obligations. We should feel disgraced if we did not pay our tailor or our wine-merchant; but such a thought never presents itself to us when the question concerns God or the devil, or that part of us that does not wear clothes and does not drink wine."

He had risen while he was speaking, and spoke with an energy and earnestness I had never yet witnessed in any man. Whether right or wrong, his view of things towered so high above my own blurred and crooked vision that I felt myself

crouch and grow small before him. The watch-tower of his faith planted him high up among the stars of heaven, while I groped and struggled far away down in the darkness. Oh! if I could only climb up there and stand with him, and see the world and all things in it from that divine and serene height, instead of impiously endeavoring to build up my own and others' little Babel that was to reach the skies and enable us to behold God. But conversions are not wrought by a few sentences nor by the mere emotions of the heart; not by Truth itself, which is for ever speaking, for ever standing before and confronting us, its mark upon its forehead, yet we pass it blindly by; for has it not been said that "having eyes they see not, and having ears they hear not"?

"Kenneth," I said, stretching out my hand, which he clasped in both of his, "the subject which has been called up I feel to be far too solemn to be dismissed with the sneer and scoff that have grown into my Indeed, I always so renature. garded it secretly; but perhaps the foolish manner in which I have hitherto treated it was owing somewhat to the foolish people with whom I have had to deal from my boyhood. They give their reasons about this, that, and the other as parrots repeat their lesson, with interjectory shrieks and occasional ruffling of the poll, all after the same pattern. You seem to me to be in earnest; but, if you please, we will say no more about it—at least now."

"As you please," he replied.
"Here I am at the end of my cigar.
So good-night, my dear boy. Well,
you have had my to-whit to your
to-whoo."

And so a strange day ended. I

sat thinking some time over our conversation. Kenneth's observations opened quite a new train of thought. It had never occurred to me before that life was a great battle-field, and that all men were, as it were, ranged under two standards, under the folds of which they were compelled to fight. Everything had come to me in its place. A man might have his private opinions on men and things, as he collects a private museum for his own amusement; but in the main one lived and died, acted and thought, passed through and out of life, in much the same manner as his neighbor, not inquiring and not being inquired into too closely. Life was made for us, and we lived it much in the same way as we learned our alphabet, we never knew well how, or took our medicine, in the regulation doses. Sometimes we were a little rebellious, and suffered accordingly; that was Excess on any side was a bore to everybody else. It was very easy, and on the whole not unpleasant. We nursed our special crotchets, we read our newspapers, we watched our children at their gambols, we chatted carelessly away out on the bosom of the broad stream along which we were being borne so surely and swiftly into the universal goal. Why should we scan the sky and search beneath the silent waters, trembling at storms to come and treacherous whirlpools, hidden sand-banks, and cruel rocks on which many a brave bark had gone down? Chart and compass were for others; a pleasant sail only for us. There was a Captain up aloft somewhere; it was his duty and not ours to see that all was right and taut—ours to glide along in slumbrous ease, between eternal banks of regions unexplored; to feast our eyes on fair scenes, and lap our senses in musical repose. That was the true life. Sunken rocks, passing storms, mutinies among the crew, bursting of engines—what were such things to us? Had we not paid our fares and made our provision for the voyage, and was not the Captain bound to land us safely at our journey's end, if he valued his position and reputation?

The devil, the world, and the flesh! What nightmare summoned these up, and set them glaring horribly into the eyes of a peaceful British subject? What had the devil to do with me or I with the devil? What were the world and the flesh? Take my father, now; what had they to do with him? Or Fairy? Why, her life was as pure as that sky that smiled down upon her with all its starry eyes. Let me see; there were others, however, who afforded better subjects for investigation. Whenever you want to find out anything disagreeable, call on your friends and neighbors. There was the Abbot Iones, now; let us weigh him in the triple scale. How fared the devil, the world, and the flesh with the Abbot Jones? He was, as I said to Kenneth, a very genial man; he had lived a good life, married into an excellent family, paid his bills, had a choice library, a good table, was an excellent judge of cattle, and a preacher whom everybody praised. Abbot Jones was faultless! There was not a flaw to be found in him from the tip of his highly-polished toe to the top of his highly-polished head. He had a goodly income, but he used it cautiously; for Clara and Alice were now grown up, and were scarcely girls to waste their lives in a nunnery, like my cousins, the daughters of Archdeacon Herbert, who adored all that was sweetly

mortifying and secluded, yet, by one of those odd contradictions in female and human nature generally, never missed a fashion or a ball. Yes, Abbot Jones was a good and exemplary man. To be sure, he did not walk barefoot or sandal-shod. not alone among the highways, where men could see and admire, but into the byways of life, down among the alleys of the poor, where clustered disease, drunkenness, despair, death; where life is but one long sorrow. But then for what purpose did he pay a curate, unless to do just this kind of dirty, apostolic work, while the abbot devoted himself to the cares of his family, the publication of an occasional pamphlet, and that pleasant drawing-room religion that finds its perfection in good dinners, sage maxims, and cautious deportment? If the curate neglected his duty, that was clearly the curate's fault, and not the abbot's. If the abbot were clothed, not exactly in purple, but in the very best of broadcloth, and fasted only by the doctor's orders, prayed not too severely, fared sumptuously every day of his life, he paid for every inch of cloth, every ounce of meat, every drop of that port for which his table was famous; for he still clung to the clerical taste for a wine that at one time assumed a semi-ecclesiastical character, and certain crumbs from his table went now and then to a stray Lazarus. Yes, he was a faultless man, as the world went. He did not profess to be consumed with the zeal for souls. His life did not aim at being an apostolic one. He had simply adopted a profitable and not unpleasant profession. If a S. Paul had come, straggling, footsore, and weary, into Leighstone, and begun preaching to the people and attacking shepherds who guarded not their fold, but quietly napped and sipped their port, while the wolves of irreligion, of vice and misery in every form, entered in and rent the flock from corner to corner, the abbot would very probably have had S. Paul arrested for a seditious vagrant and a disturber of the public peace.

Take my uncle, the archdeacon: what thought he of the world, the flesh, and the devil? As for the last-named enemy of the human race, he did not believe in him. personal devil was to him simply a bogy wherewith to frighten children. It was the outgrowth of mediæval superstition, a Christianized version of a pagan fable. The devil was a gay subject with Archdeacon Herbert, who was the wittiest and courtliest of churchmen. His mission was up among the gods of this world; his confessional ladies' boudoirs, his penance an epigram, his absolution the acceptance of an invitation to dinner. He breathed in a perfumed atmosphere; his educated ear loved the rustle of silks; he saw no heaven to equal a coachand-four in Rotten Row during the season. It was in every way fitting that such a man should sooner or later be a bishop of the Church Established. He was an ornament to his class—a man who could represent it in society as well as in the pulpit, whose presence distilled dignity and perfume, and whose views were what are called large and liberal-that is to say, no "views" at all. What the three enemies had to do with my uncle I could not see. I could only see that he would scarcely have been chosen as one of The Twelve; but then who would be chosen as one of The Twelve in these days?

I went to the window and looked out. The moon was going down

behind S. Wilfrid's, and Leighstone was buried in gloomy shadow. Down there below me in the darkness throbbed thousands of hearts resting a little in peaceful slumber till the morning came to wake them again to the toil and the struggle, the pleasure and the pain, the good and the evil, of another day. The good and the evil. Was there no good and evil waiting down there by the bedside of every one, to face them in the morning, and not leave them until they returned to that bedside at night? Was there a great angel somewhere up above in that solemn, silent, ever-watchful heaven, with an open scroll, writing down in awful letters the good and the bad, the white and the black, in the life of each one of us? Were we worth this care, weak little mortals, human machines, that we were? What should our good or our evil count against the great Spirit, whom we are told lives up above there in the passionless calm of a fixed eternity? Did we shake our puny fists for ever in the face of that broad, bent heaven that wrapped us in and overwhelmed us in its folds, what effect would it have? If we held them up in prayer, what profited it? of men could storm heaven or search hell? And yet, as Kenneth said, a life that could not end was an awful thing. That the existence we feel within us is never to cease; that the power of discriminating between good and evil, define them, laugh at them or quibble about them as we may, can never die out of us; that we are irresistibly impelled to one or the other; that they are always knocking at the door of our hearts, for we feel them there; that they cannot be blind influences, knowing not when to come or when to go, but

the voices of keen intelligences acting over the great universe, wherever man lives and moves and has his being; that they are not creations of our own, for they are independent of us; we may call evil good and good wicked, but in the end the good will show itself, and the evil throw off its disguise in spite of us—what does all this say but that there is an eternal conflict going on, and that, will he or will he not, every man born into the world must take a share in it?

That being so, search thine own heart, friend. Leave thy uncle, leave thy neighbor, and come back to thyself. Let them answer for their share; answer thou for thine. Which is thy standard? It cannot be both. What part hast thou borne in the conflict? What giants killed? What foes overcome? Hast thou slain that doughty giant within thee-thine own self? Is there no evil in thee to be cast out? No stain upon the scutcheon of thy pure soul? No vanity, no pride, no love of self above all and before all, no worship of the world, no bowing to Mammon or other strange gods, not to mention graver blots than all of these? Let thy neighbor pass till all the dross is purged out of thee. There is not a libertine in all the world but would wish all the world better, provided he had not to become better with Thy good wishes for others are shared by all men alike, by the worst as by the best. Begin at home, friend, and root out and build up there. Trim thy own garden, cast out the weeds, water and tend it well. The very sight of it is heaven to the weary wayfarer who, having wandered far away from, his own garden, sinks down at thy side, begrimed with the dust of the road and the smoke of sin. You

may tear him to pieces, you may lacerate his soul, you may cast him, bound hand and foot, into the outer darkness, yet never touch his heart. But he will stand afar off and admire when he sees thy garden blowing fair, and all the winds of heaven at play there, all the dews of heaven glistening there, all the sunshine of heaven beaming there; then will he come and creep close up to thee,

desiring to take off the shoes from his feet, soiled with his many wanderings in foul places. Then for the first time he feels that he has wandered from the way, will see the stains upon him, and with trembling fingers hasten to cast them off, and, standing barefoot and humble before Him who made thee pure, falter out at length, "Lord, it is good for us to be here,"

CHAPTER III.

AU REVOIR .- THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

WE showed Kenneth such wonders as Leighstone possessed, and his visit was to us at least a very pleasant one. My father was duly informed of his harboring a Papist in his house, and, though a little stiff and stately and a little more reserved in his conversation for a day or two, he could not be other than himself-a hospitable and genial gentleman. And then Kenneth was so frank and manly, so amiable and winning, that I believe, had he solemnly assured us he was a cannibal, and avowed his voracious appetite for human flesh, not a soul would have felt disturbed in the company of so good-looking and well-bred a monster. Perhaps, after all, had we questioned our hearts, the capital sin of Papistry lay in its clothes. Papistry was to my father, and more or less to all of us, the Religion of Rags. Leighstone had no Catholic church, and its Catholic population was restricted to a body of poor Irish laborers and their families, who were most of them the poorest of the poor, and tramped afoot of a Sunday to a wretched litte barn of a church eight miles away, which was served by a priest of a large town in the neighborhood. However much of the devil there might be among them, there was certainly little of what is generally understood by the world and the flesh. Yes, theirs was a Religion of Rags, and it was at once odd and sad to see how rags did congregate around the Ca-

tholic church—an excellent church indeed for them and their wearers, but not exactly the place to drive to heaven in in a coach-and-four. It was a positive shock to my father to find so fine a young man as Kenneth Goodal a firm believer in the Religion of Rags. Of course he knew all about the Founder of Christianity being born in a stable, and so on; but that was a great and impressive lesson, not intended exactly to be imitated by every one. Princes in disguise may play any pranks they please. Once the beggar's cloak is. thrown off, everything is forgiven. We quite forget that hideous hump. of Master Walter in the play when, just before the curtain drops, he announces himself as "now the Earl of Rochdale," Indeed, it was a kind of social offence to see a young man of breeding, blood, and bearing, such as Kenneth Goodal, take his place among the rank and file, the army of tatterdemalions, that made up the modern Church of Rome, as it showed itself to the eyes of English respectability. Irish reapers, men and maid-servants, cooks, beggars, the halt, the lame, and the blind-these made up the army of modern Crusaders. S. Lawrence himself was very well, but S. Lawrence's treasures were very ill. The descendants of Godfrey de Bouillon, the mail-clad knights of the Lion-Hearted Richard, my ancestor-Sir Roger, all made a very respectable body-guard for a faith and a church; but the followers of Peterthe Hermit, the lower layer of society, the lazzaroni-these were certainly uninviting, and gave the religion to which they belonged something of the aspect of a moral leperhood, to be separated from the multitude, and not even sniffed afar off. Yet here was a handsome young gallant like Kenneth Goodal plunging deep into it, with eye of pride and steadfast heart, and a strange faith that it was the right thing to do. It was positively perplexing, and before Kenneth left us my father had another attack of gout.

Kenneth had the skill and good taste never to obtrude unpleasant discussions. The only thing about him was a certain tone in his conversation that made you feel, as decidedly as though you saw it written in his open face, that he sailed under very pronounced colors. It was no pirate, no decoy flag hung out to lure stray craft into danger, and give place at the last moment to the death's head and crossbones. It was the same in all weather and in all seas. "The Crusades only ended with the cross," he had said to me in our first conversation together; and it seemed that I saw the cross painted on his bosom, and borne about with him wherever he went-a very Knight-Hospitaller in the XIXth century. In our long rambles together he and I had many a hard tussle. I was the only one with whom he conversed on religious subjects at all, and when he went away he left the leaven working. The good seed had been sown, whether on stony ground, or among thorns, or on the good soil, God alone could tell.

We missed him greatly when he went. He was so thorough an antiquarian and such a capital chess-player that my father was

irritated at his absence, and had a second attack of the gout. Nellie was looking forward and already making preparations for the visit we had promised to pay his mother at Christmas; and as for me, I had lost my alter ego, and spent more time than ever in the churchyard. Even Mattock noticed the frequency of my visits; for he said to me one morning, as I watched him digging a fresh grave: "Ye're acomin' here too often, Master Roger. Gravevards and graves and what's in 'em is loike enough company for me, but not for sich as ye. It an't whoalsome, it an't. Corpses grows on a man, they doos, and weighs him down in spoite of himself. I doant know what I should adone these twenty-foive year, only for the drams I takes. I couldn't a-kep up, I couldn't. somethin' about churchyeards and graves, a kind o' airthiness loike, that creeps into a man's veins, as the years come on him, that at times I doant seem to know exactly which is the livin' and which is the We're all airth, Payrson dead. Knowles says, and Payrson Knowles is a knowledgable man; but he doant come here too often. I know we're all airth: for an't I seen it? An't I seen the body of as putty a young gal as was ever kissed under the mistletoe stretched out and laid in her grave afore the New Year dawned, and turned her out a year or so after, a handful o' bones ve might take in a shovel and putt in a basket, and a doag wouldn't look at em? Ay, many a sich! I've seen 'em set in rows in the pews within thear, and seen 'em go a-flirtin' and a-smirkin' out through you gate; and when the cholera cum, I've laid 'em row by row i' the airth here. I've got used to it, bless ye, and could a'most tell their bones. I knows 'em all, and doant mind it a bit; and I shall feel kind a-comfortable when my son. whom I've brought up to the bizness and eddicated a-purpose for it, lays me by the side on 'em. vonder in that corner where the sun shines of an evenin'. But sich thoughts an't for you, Master Roger. Git ye out into the sun, lad, and play while ye may. There's no sort o' use in forestallin' yer time. an't brought up to be a grave-digger, and ye've no sort a-business here. Its onlooky, I tell ye, its onlooky. Graves is my business, not yourn. So git ye gone, Master Roger."

One effect came from my cogitations with myself and my conversations with Roger: I no longer went to church. Indeed, I had not been too regular an attendant at the Priory for some time past. Still, when, as not unfrequently happened, my father was laid up with the gout, I escorted Nellie to church as in the old days, and thus sufficiently sustained the Herbert reputation for that steady devotion to public duties that was looked for from the leading family in the place; and though Mr. Knowles, who was a frequent visitor at our house, grew a little chilly in his reception of me when we met-I used to be a great favorite of his-he had never undertaken to mention my delinquency to me. There was a certain warmth in his agreement with my father, when that good gentleman broke out on his favorite subject of the young men of the day, that was very different from the old, deprecatory manner in which Mr. Knowles would refer to the hot blood of youth, and the danger of keeping it too much in restraint. came to the resolution that I would go to no church any more until I

went to some church once for all. until I was satisfied that I believed firmly and truly in the worship at which I assisted. Anything else seemed to me now a sham that I could no more endure than if I set up a Chinese image in my own chamber, and burned incense before it. This was all very well for one Sunday or two. But my father's attack was at this time unusually prolonged; and when, Sunday after Sunday, I conducted Nellie to the church-door, and there left her, to meet and escort her home when service was over, my strange conduct, unknown to myself, began to be remarked in Leighstone, and assumed the awful aspect in a small place of studied bad example. Poor Nellie did not know what to make of me; far less Mr. Knowles. It seemed that some silly young men of the town, taking their cue from me, thought it the fashionable thing to conduct their relatives to the church-door, leave them there, and often spend the interval in somewhat boisterous behavior outside that on more than one occasion disturbed the services; so that at length Mr. Knowles was compell ed to mention the matter in general terms from the pulpit, and came out with quite a stirring sermon on the influence of bad example on the young by those who, if respect for God and God's house had no weight with them, might at least pay some regard to what their position in society, not to say in their own circle, required. Poor Nellie came home in tears that day, and I joked with her on the unusual eloquence of Mr. Knowles. final upshot of it all was a visit on the part of that reverend gentleman to my father, who was just recovering from his attack; and as ill-luck would have it, I walked into the

room just at the moment when my poor father, between the twinges of conscience and the twinges of a relapse resulting from Mr. Knowles' eloquent and elaborate monologue on my depravity, had reached that point of indignation that only needs the slightest additional pressure to produce an immediate explosion.

"What is this I hear, sir?" he asked me immediately in a tone that sent all the Herbert blood tingling through every vein in my body, the more so that I observed the look of righteous indignation planted on the jolly visage of Mr. Knowles. "What is this I hear? That you refuse to go to church any more, and that, as a natural consequence, the whole parish is following your example?"

"The whole parish!" I ejacu-

lated in amazement.

"Yes, sir; and what else should they do when the heads of the parish neglect their duty as Christians and as English gentlemen?"

"Do their duty, I suppose; go or stay, as it pleases them," I responded sullenly. Mr. Knowles rose up to depart with the air of one who was about to shake the dust off his feet against me; but my father detained him.

"Mr. Knowles, will you oblige me by remaining? I have put up with this boy's insolence too long. It must end somewhere. It shall end here." He was white and trembling with rage; but his tone lowered and his voice grew steady as he went on. I was alarmed for

his sake.

"Look here, sir. There is no more argument in a matter of this kind between you and your father. There is no argument in a question of plain and positive duty. Your family has been and still is looked up to in this town; and rightly so,

Mr. Knowles will permit me to add." Mr. Knowles bowed a gracious but solemn assent. "I have attended that church since I was a child, as my father did before me, and as the Herberts have done for generations, as befitted loval and right-minded gentlemen. You have done the same until recently. What has come over you of late I don't know, and, indeed, I don't care. What I do care about is that I have a position to sustain in this town, and a public duty to perform. The Herberts are now, as they have ever been, known to all as a staunch, loval, church-going, God-fearing race. As the head of the family I insist, and will insist while I live, that that character be maintained. When I am gone, you may do as you please. But until that event occurs you will take your old place by the side of your father and sister, or find yourself another residence. Mr. Knowles, oblige me by staying to dinner."

I was not present at dinner that day. I saw that expostulation was useless, and accordingly held my tongue. I knew of old that there was a certain pass where reasoning of any kind was lost on my father, and a resolution taken at such a moment was irrevocably fixed. Like father, like son. Even while he was addressing me I had quietly resolved at all hazards to disobey his order. So much for all my fine cogitations regarding the rules of right and wrong. first outcome was a deliberate resolve at any hazard to disobey a loving and good parent, backed up by all the spiritual power of the church and things established, as represented in the person of Mr. Knowles. What my precise duty under the circumstances was I am not prepared to say, although I

know very well that the opinion of that highly respectable authority known as common-sense would decide the question against me. I was not yet quite of age. If I belonged to any religion at all. I belonged to that in which I had been brought up. For a young gentleman who professed to be so anxious to do what was right, the duty of obedience to his father in a matter where of all things that father was surely entitled to obedience, and where the effort to obey cost so little, where the result as regarded others could not but be satisfactory, not to say exemplary, looked remarkably like an opportunity of regulating one's conduct by the best of rules at once. In fact, everything, according to common-sense, voted dead against me. On the other hand there lay a great doubta doubt sharpened and strengthened in the present instance by the very natural resentment of a young gentleman who, perhaps unconsciously, had come to regard many of his father's opinions with something very like contempt, being lectured publicly—the public being restricted to Mr. Knowles-by that father, as though, instead of having just emerged from his teens, he were still a schoolboy. Rebellion begins with the incipient moustache. Those scrubby little blotches of growing hair on the upper lip of youth mean much more than youth's laughing friends can see in them. Their roots are the roots of man-As the line grows and strengthens and defines itself, each new hair marks a mighty step forward into the great arena to which all boyhood looks with eagerness. It is the open charter to rights that were not dreamed of before. And if the artist's skill can advance its growth by the use of delicate pig-

ments, why, so much the better. I was a man, and it was a man's duty to assert himself, to do what was becoming in a man, whatever the consequence might be. All which meant that I was determined to rebel. Consequently, I declined to meet the Reverend Mr. Knowles at dinner. I strolled out, with doubtless a more independent stride than usual, to study the situation in all its bearings, and resolve upon my future course of conduct; for in two days it would be Sunday, and the crisis would have arrived.

The argument, interesting as it was to myself at the time, would scarcely prove equally so to the reader, who will thank me for sparing him the details. Doubtless many a one can look back into his own life and find a similar instance of resolute disobedience. which, it is to be hoped, he has as bitterly repented as I did this. Happy is he if he can recall only one such instance; thrice happy if he is innocent of any! I was moral coward enough to forestall my sentence by flight. I was young, strong, and active, though hitherto I had had no very definite object whereon to exercise my activity. The world was all before me; and the world, as we all know, wears a very fascinating face to the youth of twenty who has never yet looked behind the mask and seen all the uglv things that practical philosophers assure us are to be found there. To him it is a face wondrous fair: and heaven be thanked for the deception, if deception it be, say I. The eves beam with gentleness and love. Not a wrinkle marks the smooth visage; not a frown disturbs it. On the broad, open brow is written honesty; on the rosy lips are alluring smiles; in the tones of the soft, low voice there is

magical music. What if some see on that same brow the mark of Cain; on the lips, cruelty; in the eves, death: on all the face a calculating coldness? Such are those who have failed, who have missed life's meaning and cast away their chances-youthful philosophers who have been crossed in love, or voluptuaries of threescore and ten. But to high-hearted youth the world holds up a magic mirror, wherein he sees a fairy landscape full of harmony, and peace, and beauty, and love, all grouped around a central figure surpassing all, beautifying all—himself and his destiny!

Yes, I would go out into the world, like the prince in the fairytales-he is always a prince-to seek my fortune. Up to the present I had done absolutely nothing for myself. Everything had run in a monotonous groove mapped out according to the conventional rule, as regularly as a railway, and without even the pleasing excitement of an accident. Why not begin now? Why not carve out my own destiny—carve is an excellent term in my own way? "The world was mine oyster, which with my sword I'd open." What though the oyster was rather large, who said he was going to swallow it? It was the pearl within I sought; perish the esculent! Who knows what discoveries I may not make, what impenetrable forests pierce, what lonely princesses deliver from their charmed sleep, what giant monsters slay on the way, bringing back the spoils some day to my father—some day! say in six months or so-and, laying them at his feet, cry out in triumph, "Father, behold the prodigal returned. not like him of old, who had squandered his inheritance and fed on the husks of swine, but as a mighty conqueror, the admired of fair women and the envy of brave men! Father, this mighty potentate is I, Roger, your son, who would not bow the knee to Knowles!"

It was a pleasing picture, and took my fancy amazingly. Had any young friend of mine come to consult me at that moment on a similar project in his own case, I believe my counsel to him would have been of the sagest. I would have told him to go home and sleep over the matter; to be a good boy and not anger a loving parent. I would have advised him that there is nothing like doing the duty that lies plain before us; that there was a world of wisdom and of truth in that sage maxim of S. Augustine, Age quod agis-Do what you do; that his schemes were visionary, his plans those of a schoolboy, who clearly enough knew nothing whatever of the world (whose depths, of course, I had sounded), who might have read books enough, but had not the slightest experience of that which is never to be found in booksreal life; that, in pursuit of a passing fancy, he was neglecting the real business of life, and embarking on a voyage to Nowhere in the good ship Nothing, and That is the advice I so on. should have delivered to any of my young friends who were idiots enough to think that they could venture to set out on such a visionary road alone and without map or chart to guide them. That is how we should all have advised our friends. But with ourselveswith ourselves—ah! the case is different. We can always do what it would be the most presumptuous folly in others to attempt.

safely thrust our hand into the fire, up to the elbow even, where another dare not trust the tip of a little finger. We can touch pitch, and never show a soil. We can go down into hell, and come back laughing at the devil, who dare not touch us. What would be moral death to another is a mere tonic to us. And yet, and yet, He who taught us to pray gave us as a petition: "Father, . . . lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

My mind was made up; and let me add that the fear of putting my father to the trying test of acting upon his resolution in my regard had no small share in shaping my resolve. I did not see him that night, and on the next day he was confined to his room by an attack that necessitated calling in the doctor, and kept Nellie, whom I did not wish to see, by his side most of the day. I felt that I could not meet her eye without divulging all. I had never done anything that would cause more than a passing care to those who loved me, and I now moved about the house as though I were about to commit or had already committed a great crime. Not accustomed to deception, it seemed to me that any passing stranger—let alone Fairy Nell, who knew me through and through, and had counted every hair of that incipient moustache already hinted at as it came, from whom I had never kept a secret, not even the pigments laid apart for the cultivation of that same moustache-would have read in my guilty face, as plainly as though it were written down on parchment, "Roger Herbert, you are going to run away from home-not a pleasant excursion, my fine fellow, but a genuine bolt!" I packed up a few

necessaries, and collected such stray cash of my own as I could lav hands on. The sum seemed a small fortune for a man resolved on entering on such a resolute life of hard labor of some kind or another as I had marked out for myself. Long before that was exhausted I should of course be in a position to provide for myself. How that selfsupport was to come about I had not yet exactly decided on; but that was to be an after-consideration. While I was waiting for the night to come down and shield my guilty purpose, Nellie stole in from my father's room to tell me he was sleeping, and that Dr. Fenwick said a good night's rest would relieve him from all danger, and in two or three days he would be himself again. This comforted me and enabled me to be better on my guard against the witcheries of Fairy, who came and sat down near me; for she had heard or guessed at the dispute that had arisen, and, like an angel of a woman, now that she had tended my father, came to administer a little crumb of comfort to me before going to bed. What an effort it cost me to appear drowsy and to yawn! I thought every yawn would have strangled me; but I was resolved to be on my guard.

"How dreadfully sleepy you are to-night, Roger!" said the Fairy at

"Am I?" asked the Ogre, with a tremendous yawn.

"Why, you've done nothing but gape ever since I came in. I believe you are getting quite lazy and good-for-nothing."

"I believe so too."

"Well, why don't you do something?"

"I think I will." Another yawn.
"I'll go to bed. Ter. o'clock, by

Jove! What a shocking hour for well-behaved young ladies to be up! Come, Fairy, I will do something some day. Is father better?"

"Yes, he is sleeping quite soundly." Shaking her head and speaking in a solemn little whisper:

"O you naughty boy!"

Clear eyes, clear heart, clear conscience! How your mild innocence pierces through and through us, rebuking the secret that we think so safely hidden in the far-away depths of our souls! That gentle little reproof of my sister smote me to the heart.

"Why, Roger, what is the matter

with you?"

"It's a fly; a—something in my eye—nothing. Let go my hands, Nell."

"Look me in the face, sir. You are crying, Roger. You have been pretending. You were not sleepy a bit. Dear, dear! Don't go on like that; you make me cry too."

"Nellie, my own darling—Fairy—there, let me blow the candle out. I was always a coward by candlelight. There, now I can talk. Nellie," I went on, clutching her close, her face wet with my tears as well as her own, and white as marble in the moonlight—"Nellie, I have been an awfully wicked fellow, haven't I?"

"N-no"-sob, sob.

"Yes, I have; and father is very angry with me, isn't he?"

" N-no."

"Do you think that if I were to do something very bad you could forgive me, Nellie?"

"You c-couldn't do-anything

b-bad-at all."

"Well, now listen. I haven't done much harm, I believe, so far; neither have I done much good. And now I make you a solemn promise that from this night out I

will honestly try all I can, not only to do no harm, but to do good—something for others as well as myself. Is that a fair promise, Nell?"

"Dear, darling old Roger!" she murmured, kissing me. "I knew he was good all the time. I know—you needn't say any more. You are coming to church with me tomorrow. How pleased papa will be, and how pleased I am! Here, you shall have my own book to keep as a token of the promise. I'll run and fetch it at once."

She tripped up-stairs and came back breathless, putting the book

in my hand.

"There, Roger; that seals our promise. I've just written inside, 'Roger's promise to Nellie,' and the date to remind you. That's all. And now papa will be well again. O Roger!"—she came and kissed me again, as I turned my back to the window—"you have made me so happy. Good-night."

I could not trust myself to speak again and undeceive her. I kissed her and did not look at her any more. I heard her room-door close, and. after standing a long time where she left me, I followed her up-stairs. I stole to my father's door and listened. I could hear his regular breathing; he was sound asleep. I do not know how long I listened. but at length I crept away to my own room. My resolution was terribly shaken by Nellie's innocent confidence in me. It is so much easier to endure harshness or suspicion from persons to whom you know you are about to give pain. Why didn't she scold me, or turn up her pretty nose at me, or stick a pin in me, or do something dreadful to me-anything rather than believe me the best fellow in the world? But, after all, could I not

return when I pleased? I had often been away before for a month or more on a visit to some friends—for months together at college. Why should I hesitate to go now?

Poor Nellie's book was placed in the very bottom of my bag, and then I sat down and wrote the following letter:

"Nellie: I am going away for a little while—for a month or more, probably. You must not expect to hear anything of me within that time. If you do hear of me, it will probably be through Kenneth Goodal. Indeed, I leave England on Monday, and my return will depend altogether upon circumstances. Nobody knows of my going or of my destination—not even Kenneth; so that it will be useless to make any inquiries. Give my love to my dear father, and tell him that, wherever I may be, the thought of him will always accompany me and prevent me from doing anything unworthy his son and your loving brother,

ROGER.

"P.S .- I will keep my promise."

This note, sealed and addressed to Nellie, I left upon my table. waited until not a sound was to be heard through all the house, and again left my room to listen at my father's door. I listened at Nellie's also. Nothing could be heard in either. They were sound asleepdreaming, perhaps, of me. My window overlooked the garden, and a soft grass-plot beneath received myself and my bag noiselessly, as I made the drop I had so often done in play, to the mingled alarm and admiration of Fairy. After a walk of about five minutes I lit a cigar, and felt somewhat more companionable than before. The moon had gone down long since, and a faint flush in the east low down on the horizon betokened the dawn. There was a keenness in the air and a freshness all around that quickened the blood and inspirited the faint

heart. The sense of freedom awoke in me with every stride that carried me away from my father's house out into the world, whose largeness I was beginning to feel for the first time. There was something about the whole enterprise of novelty and boldness and change that grew on me every mile of the way. I thought less and less of the consternation and grief I might occasion to those I left behind me, and whose existence was bound up in mine. And striding along in this frame of mind, I reached Gnaresbridge, where I was not known. My walk of eight miles had given me a tremendous appetite. I entered the railway hotel, and, by way of beginning at once my life of privation and economy. ordered a right royal breakfast, the best the railway hotel could offer. I then took a first-class ticket for London, engaged a room for one night at the Charing Cross Hotel, and, finding my own company not of the liveliest, strolled out into the streets.

The London streets are beyond measure dull on a Sunday. There is a constrained air of good-behavior and drilled respectability about the crowds going to and coming from church at the stated hours that strikes one with a chill after the bustle and noise of the other six days of the week. Religion looks so oppressively dull and hopelessly solemn. The citizens seem to run up the shutters in front of their own persons as well as of their goods; to bolt and bar and case themselves in a wooden stolidity of dull propriety that is mistaken for religion. I do not say that it is not well done; I only say that to me, at least, on this occasion it was disagreeable. The light spirits I had picked up on the road dwindled down immediately at sight of the solemn city, with its solemn The sombre gray of my crowds. surroundings seemed to settle on my mind and heart like ashes from which every spark had gone out. I fell a-musing, and involuntarily followed one of the streams of people that were moving along slowly to some place of worship. I felt sick at heart, and wished for the morrow to come that was to bear me away somewhere out of this tame and conventional life, where religion as well as business followed a fixed routine. Before I knew or had time to think how I had got there, I found myself in a Catholic church. I knew it to be a Catholic church by the altar, and the crucifixes, and the Stations of the Cross around the walls, and the general appearance of the congregation. There is something about a Catholic congregation that distinguishes it at once from all others. Heaven seems a happier place somehow from a Catholic point of had visited Catholic view. I churches before, but was never present at the Mass, and was about to retire as soon as I discovered my whereabouts, when curiosity, mingled with the conviction that I might be as comfortably miserable there as outside, detained me, and I remained. Somebody directed me to a seat close to the altar, where I could see everything perfectly.

The service was varied and full of dignified movements, but I could not understand its meaning. The singing was good, it seemed to my poor ear; but I could not say the same for the sermon. A quiet, pious-looking gentleman preached from the altar a long and, to me, tedious discourse. He seemed in earnest, however, and now and

then his pale, worn face would light up—once or twice especially when he spoke of the "Mother of God." Indeed, I found myself just becoming interested when the sermon concluded. There was something far more impressive to me than the priest's discourse, than the solemn music, than the gleaming lights, than the slow and reverent movements at the altar, in the congregation itself. The people preached a silent but most telling sermon. looked furtively around, and watched them. Whether they were mistaken or not, whether they were idolaters or not, there was certainly no sham about them; after all, there was something thorough about this Religion of Rags. Beyond doubt they prayed in real, downright earnest. One man differed from another; one woman from her sister; this one was in rags, that in silks; this man might be a lord, and his neighbor a beggar; but there was something common to them all. They seemed, as they knelt there, possessed of one heart and one They appeared even one body. Their prayer seemed universal and to pass from one to another out and up to God. All seemed to feel an Invisible Presence, which, from association, doubtless, I could have persuaded myself that I also felt. A bell tinkles, once, twice, thrice; once, twice, thrice again. There is an instantaneous hush; the low breathing of the organ has ceased; and every head and heart is bowed down in silent and awful adoration. Involuntarily I also knelt and bowed.

Deeply impressed, I left the church at the conclusion of the service, and seemed to be walking in a dream, when a light touch on my shoulder startled and recalled

me to my senses, while a voice whispered in my ear:

"Heretic, heretic! what dost thou here?"

It was Kenneth Goodal who stood smiling before me. tears sprang to my eyes, but he was too much himself to notice them. He drew my arm in his, and led me to a carriage that was waiting near the door of the church. Within the carriage sat a beautiful lady, whose likeness to Kenneth was too apparent not to recognize her at once as his mother. "I have brought you a treasure," said Kenneth, addressing her; "this is the very Roger Herbert of whom I have spoken to you so much. Who would have dreamed of catching my heretic at Mass?" We were rolling along through the dull streets by this time, but it was wonderful to think how their dulness had suddenly departed. "Yes, actually at Mass. And I verily believe he blessed himself and said his prayers like a true Christian. And where of all places should they plant you but right in front of me ?"

Kenneth's mother was a sweet lady-just the kind of woman, indeed, I should have expected Kenneth's mother to be. To great intelligence and that keen power of observation so noticeable in her son were added the charms of a face and person that defied time, while the veil of true Christian womanhood fell over, softened, and chastened all. She was a fervent Catholic, who went about doing good. Kenneth laughingly told me that her conversion had cost him a great deal more trouble and difficulty than his own; but hers once attained, his father's followed almost as a matter of course. Mrs. Goodal had always been so pure

and blameless in her own life that her very excellence constituted a most difficult but intangible barrier to her son's theological batteries. Even if she became a Catholic. what could she be other than she was? she had asked him once. Of what crimes was she guilty, that she should change her religion at the whim of a youthful enthusiast? Did she not pray to God every day of her life? Did she not give alms, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowful, clothe the naked? What did the Catholic ladies do that she did not? She was not, and did not mean to become, a Sister of Charity, devoting herself absolutely to prayer and good works. Her place was in the world. God had placed her there, and there she would remain. doing her duty to the best of her ability as a Christian wife and mother.

It was certainly a hard case, and she was greatly strengthened in her position by her grand ally, Lady Carpton. Both these excellent women grieved sorely over Kenneth's defection; for Kenneth was an especial favorite of Lady Carpton's, and had been smiled upon by her fair daughter, Maud. The two ladies had taken it into their heads that Kenneth and Maud were admirably matched, and their marriage had long ago been fixed upon by the respective mammas, who never kept a secret from each other since they had been bosom friends together at school. The announcement of Kenneth's joining the Religion of Rags fell like a bombshell into the camp of the allies, scattering confusion and dealing destruction on all sides. Lady Carpton washed her hands of him, and came to the immediate conclusion that "the boy's mental obliquity was inexplicable. The rash and ridiculous step he had taken was fatal to all his prospects in this life, not to speak of those in the next. He had inexcusably abandoned the social position for which his connections and his rational gifts had eminently fitted him. She had been deceived, fatally deceived, in him. He had destroyed his own future, disgraced his family, and consigned himself henceforward to a life of uselessness and oblivion."

Lady Carpton, when fairly roused, had an eloquence as well as a temper of her own. Majestically washing her hands of Kenneth, she immediately encouraged the attentions of Lord Cheshunt to her daughter. From jackets upwards Lord Cheshunt had worshipped the very ground upon which Maud trod, as far as it was given to the soul of Lord Cheshunt to worship anything or anybody at all. Maud resembled her mother. Great as her liking -it was never more-for Kenneth had been, her virtuous indignation was greater. With some sighs, doubtless, perhaps with some tears. she renounced for ever Kenneth the renegade, and took in his stead, as a dutiful daughter should do, her share in the lands, appurtenances, rent-roll, and all other belongings of Lord Cheshunt, with his lordship into the bargain. It was on her return from the bridal trip that her mamma, with tears of vexation in her eyes, informed her of the cruel blow that the friend of her girlhood had dealt her-out of small personalspite, she was certain. The friend of her girlhood was Mrs. Goodal. who had actually followed that scapegrace son of hers to Romehad positively become a Catholic! And as though to confirm the wretched saying that misfortunes never come alone, between them they had dragged into their fatal

web that dear, good-natured, unsuspecting Mr. Goodal, just at the moment when he was about to be returned in High Church interest for his native borough of Royston. Thus "the cause" had lost another vote, at a time, too, when "the cause" sadly needed recruiting in the parliamentary ranks. dear," she said impressively to Maud, "vou have had a very fortunate escape. Who knows what might have become of you? Lord Cheshunt may not possess that young man's intellect "-and Maud was already obliged to confess that superabundance of intellect was scarcely Lord Cheshunt's besetting weakness-"but you see to what mental depravity the fatal gift of intellect may conduct a self-willed young man. Poor dear Lord Byron is just such another instance. Mark my word for it, Kenneth Goodal will become a Jesuit yet!"-a fatality that to Lady Carpton's imagination presented little short of the satanic.

I spent a very pleasant day and evening with the Goodals—so pleasant that it was not until I found myself saying "good-night" to Kenneth in the street that the occurrences of the last few days flashed upon me. "You will not forget your promise of coming to-morrow," he said, as he was shaking

hands.

"To-morrow! Did I promise to spend to-morrow with you?" I asked.

"So Mrs. Goodal will assure you

on your arrival."

"Good heavens! did I make so foolish a promise? I cannot have thought of what I was saying," I muttered, half to myself.

"Well, I will call for you in the morning. By the bye, where are you staying?" asked Kenneth.

"No, no. The fact is, I purpos-

ed leaving town again immediately. My visit was merely a flying one. You must make my excuses to your mother, Kenneth."

"She will never hear of them. Traitor! thou hast promised, and

thy promise is sacred."

"It was really a mistake. Well, if I decide on remaining in town over to-morrow, I will come. If—if I should not come, tell your mother how charmed I was with her, and with your father also. Kenneth, I should be so glad if she would pay Nellie a visit—my sister, you know. Indeed, I am very anxious that she should see Nellie as soon as possible."

"But you forget again that you owe us a visit. Why not come at once? You had better stay and send for your father and sister."

"Well, I will sleep on the matter. Good-night, old fellow. In the meanwhile do not forget my re-

quest."

Again my resolution was terribly shaken. I went over the entire story, and weighed all the pros and cons of the question, as I walked back to my hotel. I had not yet even determined where to go, still less what to do. On arriving at the hotel I went to the smoking-room, feeling no inclination for slumber. It had only a single occupant—a naval officer, to judge by his costume. He reached me a light, and made some conventional remark on the weather, or some such subject. He was a jovial-looking, red-faced man of about forty or forty-five, with a merry eye and a pleasant voice, and a laugh that had in it something of the depth and the strength and the healthy flavor of the sea. My cigar soon coming to an end, he offered me one of his own with the remark:

"I like a pipe myself, with good

strong Cavendish steeped in rum. The rum gives it a wholesome flavor. But ashore I always smoke cigars. You want a stiffish bit o' sea-breeze up, and then you can enjoy the true flavor of a pipe of Cavendish. All your Havanas in the world aren't half as sweet. But ashore here, why, Lord, Lord! a pipe o' Cavendish would smell from one end o' the city to t'other, and all London would turn up its nose. So I'm obliged to put up with Havanas," said the captain (I was sure he was a captain) ruefully.

"What is a mortification to you would be a pleasure to many," I remarked sagely.

"Ever been to sea?" he asked

abruptly.

"Never," I responded laconically.

He looked at me with a kind of

pity in his glance.

"What! never been outside o' this cranky little island, where men have hardly got room to blow their noses?" he asked in amazement.

"Never," I responded again.

"And what's more, up to the day before yesterday I never wished to go."

My scafaring friend sighed and smoked in silence. The silence grew solemn, and I thought he would not condescend to address me again. At length, however, he said:

"You're a Londoner, I guess."

I guessed negatively; but not at all abashed at his mistake, he went on:

"Well, it's all the same. All Londoners an't born in London, any more than all Englishmen are born in England. But they're all the same. A Londoner never cares to study any geography beyond his sixpenny map o' London. The

Marble Arch and Temple Bar, Hyde Park and London Bridge, are his points o' the compass. Guild Hall and the Houses o' Parliament mean more to him than the East or West Indies, the Himalaya Mountains, North or South America, or the Pyramids. The Strand is bigger than the equator, and the National Gallery a finer building than S. Peter's. Your thorough, home-bred Englishman is about the most vigorously ignorant man I've ever sailed across; and I'm an Englishman myself who say it. I do believe it's their very ignorance that has made them masters of the best part of the world, and the worst masters the world has ever seen. They never see or know or believe anything outside of London, and the consequence is, they're always making mighty blunders. There, there's a yarn, and a yarn always makes me thirsty. What will you drink?"

I found my new companion a shrewd and observant man under a somewhat rough coating. He was captain of a steamer belonging to one of the great lines that ply between England and the United States, and his vessel sailed for New York the next day. Here was an opportunity of ending at once all my doubts and hesitations. on broaching the subject to the captain I found him grow at once cautious, not to say suspicious. That fatal admission about my never having been to sea at all told terribly against me. Then he wanted to know if I had a companion of any kind with me, which I took to be sailor's English for asking if it were a runaway match. Satisfied on this point, he grew more suspicious still. Running away with a young lass he could understand, and perhaps be brought to pardon; but if it was not that, then what earthly object could I have in going to New York all alone?

"The fact is, youngster," he blurted out at length, "you see it an't all fair and above-board with you. Youngsters like you don't make up their minds in half an hour to go to New York; and if they do, they've no business to. If you was a little younger, I should call in a policeman, and tell him you had run away from home. I don't want to help youngsters-nor anybody else, for that matter—to run into scrapes. There will be some one crying for you, you know, and that an't pleasant now. Now, then, out with it, and let's have the whole story. There's something wrong, and a clean breast, like a good sea-sickness, will relieve you. It's a little unpleasant at first, but you'll feel all the better for it afterwards. an old sailor's word for that."

I do not attempt to give the pleasant nautical terms with which my excellent friend, the captain, garnished his discourse. However, I told him my story, sufficiently at least to diminish, if not quite to allay, the worthy man's scruples about my projected trip, which, of course, was only to last until the storm at home blew over. Finally, at a very early hour in the morning it was resolved that I should make my first voyage with the captain, and that same day I penned, and in the afternoon despatched, the following note to Kenneth:

"My DEAR KENNETH: By the time you receive this I shall be on my way to the United States I said nothing to you of my plans last night, because, had I done so, I fear they might not have been put in execution without some unnecessary pain and difficulties. My chief reason for leaving England is the great doubt and perplexity that have fallen up.

on me. Any hope of clearing up such doubt in Leighstone would be absurd. There all persons and all things run in established grooves, and are more or less under the influence of traditions, many of which have for me utterly lost all force and meaning. A little rubbing with the world, a little hard work, of which I know nothing, the sweetness as well as the anxiety of genuine struggle in places and among persons where I shall be simply another fellow-struggler, can do no great harm, even if it does no great good. At all events, it will be a change; and a change of some kind I had long contemplated. A little difficulty with my father about not attending church as usual scarcely hastened my resolution to leave Leighstone. I should feel very grateful to you if you could assure him of this, as I took the liberty on leaving of telling my sister that they would next hear of me in all probability through you. My father's kind heart and love for me may lead him to lay too great stress upon what in reality nowise affected my conduct and feelings towards him. Time is up, I find, and I can only add that wherever I may go I shall carry with me, warm in my heart, the friendship so strangely begun between us.

"R. HERBERT."

I do not purpose giving here the history of my first struggles with the world, as they contain nothing particularly exciting or romantic. The circumstances that led to my connection with Mrs. Jinks and Mr. Culpepper are easily explained. My small fortune disappeared with astonishing rapidity, and, unless I did something to replenish my dwindling purse very speedily, there was nothing left save to beg or starve. I would neither write home nor to Kenneth, being vain enough to believe that the smallest scrap of paper with my address on it would be the signal for the emigration by next steamer of half Leighstone, with no other purpose than to see me, its lost hero. Poverty led me to Mr. Culpepper among others, and the same stern guardian introduced me to Mrs. Jinks. I must confess-and the confession may be a warning to young gentlemen inclined at all to grow weary of a snug home-that any particular romance attached to my venture very soon faded out of sight. The world was not quite so pleasant a friend as I had expected. The practical philosophers were right after all. Dear, dear! how the wrinkles began to multiply in his face, and what suspicious glances shot out of those eyes, that grew colder and colder as my boots began to run down at heel, and my elbows gave indications of a violent struggle for air. It required a vast amount of resolution to keep me from volunteering to work my passage back to England. I was often lonely, often weary, often sad, often hungry even. But lonely, weary, sad, and hungry as I might be, I soon contrived to become acquainted with others who were many times more sad, lonely, and weary than I-poor wretches to whom my position at its worst seemed that of a prince. The most wretched man in all this world is vet to be found. Of that truth I became more deeply convinced every day. It was a fact held up constantly before my eyes, and I believe that it did me good. It was an excellent antidote to anything in the shape of pride. Great heavens! what wretched little, creeping, struggling mortals most of us were; crawling on from day to day, inch by inch, little by little, now over a little mound that seemed so high, and took such infinite labor to reach; now down in a little hollow that seemed the very depths, and yet was only a few inches lower than yesterday's elevation. There we were, gasping and struggling for light and food and air day after day. Poverty reads terrible lessons. It levels us all, Some it softens, while others it hardens; some it sanctifies, multitudes it leads to crime.

Not that a gleam of sunshine never came to us. Some stray ray will penetrate the darkest alley and crookedest winding, and warm and gladden and give at least a moment's life and hope and cheerfulness to something, provided only a pinhole be left open to the heaven that is smiling above us all the while. I began to make acquaintances, pleasant enough some of them, others not so pleasant. There was much food for meditation and mental colloquy in the daily life I was living, but I had no time for such indulgence. I was compelled to work very hard; for this was certainly not a vineyard where the laborers were few; and the harvest, when gathered in, was but a sorry crop at the best. Is not the history of the human race the record of one long and unsuccessful expedition after the Golden Fleece? Such stray remnants of it as fell into my hand went for the most part, for a long time at least, into the treasury of Mrs. Jinks, who, like a female Atreus, served up my own children, the children of my brain, or their equivalents, to me at table. Horrid provender! One week it was an art criticism-dressed up with wonderful condiments and melted down into mysterious soup, whose depths I shuddered to penetrate—that sustained the life in me. Another time it was a fugitive poem that took the form of roast beef and potatoes. A cruel critique on some poor girl's novel would give me ill dreams as pork-chops. A light, brisk, airy social essay would solidify into mutton. And so it went on, week in week out, the round of the table. An inspiriting life truly, where your epigrams mean cutlets, and all the brilliant fancies of your imagination go for honest bread and butter.

I believe that Mrs. Jinks secretly entertained the profoundest contempt for me and my calling, mingled with a touch of pity for a young, strong fellow who had missed his vocation, and who, instead of moping and groping over ink-pots and scraps of paper, might be earning an honest living like the butcher's young man over the way-an intimate acquaintance and close personal friend of mine who "kept company" with Mrs. Jinks' Jane. I ventured once to ask Mrs. Jinks whether she did not consider literary labor an honest mode of earning a living; but I was not encouraged to ask a similar question a second time. "She'd knowed littery gents afore now; knowed 'em to her cost, she had. They was for ever a-grumblin' at their board, and nothing was good enough for them, though they ate more than any two of her boarders put together, and always went away owin' her three months, besides a-borrerin' no end o' money and things." Such was Mrs. Jinks' experienced opinion of "littery gents." She was gracious enough to add: "You know I don't say this of you, Mr. Herbert. You don't seem to eat as well as most on 'em. You don't grumble whatever you git. You don't borrer, and you never fetches friends home with you at half-past three in the mornin', as doesn't know which is their heads and which is their heels, and a-tryin to open the streetdoor with their watchkeys; tellin' Mr. Jinks, who is a temperance man. the next mornin', that you'd been to a temperance meetin' the night afore. and took too much water. Mr. Herbert, I wouldn't believe you capable of such goins-on.

that's because you an't a reg'lar littery gent; you're only what they calls an amatoor."

Mrs. Jinks was right; I was only an amateur, though I had a faint ambition some day of being regularly enrolled in "the profession." I flattered myself that I was advancing, however slowly, to that end. More than a year had now flown by since I had left home. I came to be more and more absorbed in my work, and the days and months glided silently past me without my noticing them. close and intense absorption succeeded in shutting out to a great extent the thoughts of home. Indeed, I would not allow my mind to rest on that subject; for when I did, I was quite unmanned. It was not until I had made sufficient trial of the sweet bitterness or bitter sweetness, as may be, of what was a hard and often seemed a hopeless struggle, that I wrote to Kenneth under the strictest pledge of secrecy, giving him a true and unvarnished account of my life since we parted, and transmitting at the same time certain evidences of what I was pleased to accept as the dawn of success in the shape of sundry articles in The Packet and other journals. He was enjoined merely to inform them at home that I was in the enjoyment of good health and reaping a steady income of, at an average, ten dollars a week, which I hoped soon to be able to increase; and by a continuance of steady work and the strictest economy I had every hope, if I lived to the age of Methusaleh, of being in a position to retire on a moderate competency, and end my patriarchal days in serene retirement and contemplation under the shade of my own fig-tree. I described Mrs. Jinks and her

household arrangements at considerable length, and did that estimable lady infinite credit, while I drew a companion picture of Mr. Culpepper that would have done honor to the journal of which he was the distinguished chief. But put not your trust in bosom friends! Mine utterly disregarded my binding pledge, and the only answer I received to my letter was in Nellie's well-known handwriting on the occasion and in the manner already described,

That was a stormy passage back to England. We were detained both by stress of weather and an accident that occurred when only a few days out. It was the morning of Christmas eve when at length we landed at Liverpool. The delay had exasperated me almost into a fever. I despatched a telegram to Nellie announcing my arrival, and that I should be in Leighstone that evening. The train was crowded with holiday folk: happy children going home for the Christmas holidays; stout farmers, red and hearty, hurrying back from the Christmas. market: bright-eyed women loaded with Christmas baskets and barricaded by parcels of every description. The crisp, cold air seemed. redolent of Christmas pudding and good cheer. The guard wished us. a merry Christmas as he examined our tickets. The stations flashed: a merry Christmas on us out of their gay festoons of holly and ivy with bright-red berries and an ermine fringe of snow, as we flew along, though it seemed to me that we were crawling. Just as we entered London the snow began to fall, and I was grateful for it. I was weary of the clear, cold, pitilessa sky under which we had passed.

London was in an uproar, as it always is on a Christmas eve; but the uproar rather soothed me than otherwise. What I dreaded was quiet, when my own thoughts and fears would compel me to listen to their remorse and foreboding. I saw lights flashing. I heard voices calling through the fog and the snow. Songs were sung, and men and women talked in a confused and meaningless jargon together. heard the sounds and moved among the multitude, but with a faroff sense as in a dream. How I found my way about at all is a mystery to me, unless it were with that secret instinct that guides the sleepwalker. I saw nothing but the white snow falling, falling, white and silent and deadly cold, covering the earth like a shroud. I remember thinking of Charles I., and show on the day of his death all England was draped in a snowshroud. That incident always impressed me when a boy as so sad and significant. And here was my Christmas greeting after more than a year's absence: the sad snow falling thicker and thicker as I neared home, steadily, solemnly, silently down, with never a break or quaver in it, mystic, wonderful, impalpable as a sheeted ghost: and more than a month ago my sister called me away from another world to tell me that my father was dying.

"Great God! great God!" I moaned, "in whom I believe, against whom I have sinned, to

whom alone I can pray, spare him till I come."

"Leighstone! Leighstone!" rang out the voice of the guard.

I staggered from the railway carriage, stumbled, and fell. I had tasted nothing the whole day. The guard picked me up roughly—the very guard who used to be such a great friend of mine in the old days-a year seemed already old days. He did not recognize me now. I suppose he thought me drunk, for I heard him say, "That chap's beginning his Christmas holidays pretty early," and a loud laugh greeted the sally. I contrived to make my way outside the little station. Not a soul recognized me, and I was afraid to ask any one for information, dreading the answer that I could not have borne. Outside the station my strength gave out. My head grew dizzy; I staggered blindly towards some carriages drawn up in front of me, and fell fainting at the feet of one of the

My eyes opened on faces that I did not recognize. Some one was holding up my head, and there were strange men around me. "Thank God! he recovers," said a voice I knew well, and all came back on me in a flash.

"Kenneth!" I cried, "Kenneth! Is he dead?"

"Hush, old boy. Take it easy. Rest awhile."

His silence was sufficient.

"My God! I am punished!" I gasped out, and fainted again.

CHAPTER IV.

WE ALL MEET TO PART.

A SECOND time I recovered. I was still in the same place, and the same hand was supporting me. Some brandy was forced down my throat, and it revived me.

"Now listen," he said. "I have good news for you. Why, the man is going off again! Here, Roger, take another nip. So. Now you are much nearer being a dead man than your father, only you will not let me tell you quietly. Hush, now! Not a word, or I am dumb. You lie still and listen, and let me talk. Everything is well here. That is about as much information as you can bear at present. There is nothing the matter with anybody, except with yourself. Miss Herbert, in consequence of a lucky little telegram received this afternoon commissioned me to await your arrival here, and tell you just that much. Everything else was to be explained at the Grange, where your father and some friends are waiting to receive with open arms the returned prodigal. This much I may add: Your father has been ill, very ill. But he has recovered. Now, another nip and I think we That was Sir may be moving. Roger at whose feet you fell outside. The noble old veteran never moved a foot, or your brains might have been dashed out. He is a truer friend than I, Roger, for he knew you at once, pricked up his ears, bent down his head towards you, and gave a low whinny that told me the whole story in a second. I'll be bound you have had nothing to eat all day. That is bad. Why, you are the sick man after all. Do you feel equal to moving now? Well, come: easy—in—hold this skin up to your chin—so! And now we are off. Mr. Roger Herbert, I wish you a very merry Christmas!"

I sat silent with that delicious sense of relief after a great danger averted while the shadow of that danger has not quite passed away. Kenneth did all the talking. The snowfall had ceased and the moon was up. How well I remembered every house we passed, as the cheery lights flashed out of the windows, and the sounds of merry voices, whose owners I could almost name, broke on my ear. Leighstone seemed fairy-land, which I had reached after long wanderings through stony deserts and over barren seas. There is the old Priory, rising dark and solemn out of the white snow, with the white gravestones standing mute at the head of white graves all around it. The moonlight falls full on the family tomb. I shuddered as I looked upon it, not yet quite assured that it is not open for another occupant. I can see the frozen figure of Sir Roger stiff and stark with his winter graveclothes upon him as we roll by the Priory gates. And there, at last,

are the gleaming windows of the Grange, and the faint feeling again

steals over my heart.

The heavy snowfall deadens the sound of the wheels, and we are within the house before our arrival is known. Miss Herbert is called out quietly by a servant, a stranger to me. Dear hearts! What these women are! She does not cry out, she does not speak a word; watching and suffering had made her so wise. She clings to me, and weeps silently on my breast a long while, smothering even the sobs that threaten to break her heart. When at last we look around for Kenneth he is nowhere to be seen, but there is a strange hush over all the house, and the voices that I heard on my entrance are silent.

"Papa is alone in the study—waiting," whispered Nellie. "I received your telegram. O Roger! that little scrap of paper was like a message from heaven. He is growing anxious, but expects you. Hush! follow me."

She stole along on tiptoe, and I after her. The door of the study was ajar. She opened it softly, and, standing in the shadow, I peeped He was seated in an easy-chair and had dozed off. His face wore that gentle, languid air of one who has been very ill and is slowly recovering; of one who has looked death in the face and to whom life is still new and uncertain. Ten years seemed to have been added to his life. Whether owing to his illness or to some other cause, I could not tell, but it seemed to me that a certain look of firmness and resolve, that was at times too prominent, had quite disappeared. Instead of his own brown locks he wore a wig. He had suffered very much. The door creaked as Nellie entered, disturbing but not awakening him. He sighed, his lips moved, and I thought he muttered my name.

"Papa!" said Nellie, touching his arm lightly. How matronly the

Fairy looked! "Papa!"

"Ah! Yes, my dear. Is that you, my child? Is—is nobody with you?" What a wistful look in the eyes at that last question!

"Do you feel any better, papa? It is time to take your medicine." How slow the demure minx is

about it.

"Is it? I don't think I will take any now. I want nothing just now, my darling."

"What-no medicine! Nothing

at all, papa?"

"Nothing at all. Is not that train arrived yet?" he asked, looking around anxiously at the clock.

"I—I think so, papa. And it brought such a lot of visitors."

"Any—any—for us, Nellie?" He coughed, and his voice trembled into a feeble old treble as he asked this question.

"Only one, papa. May he come

in?"

He knew all in an instant. He rose and tottered towards the door, where he would have fallen had I not caught him in my arms. Only one word escaped him.

"Roger!"

After some time Kenneth stole in, and seeing how matters stood insisted on bearing me off to dinner. He took me into the parlor, which was blazing with lights and decorated with holly and red berries in good old Christmas fashion. The first object to meet my eyes was a great "Welcome Home" which flashed in letters of fragrant blossoms cunningly woven in strange device about my portrait. Mrs. Goodal came forward and kissed me while the tears fell from her

eyes. "You don't deserve it, you wicked boy, but I can't help it," she said. Mr. Goodal had seized both my hands in his. A beautiful girl stood a little apart watching all with wondering eyes, and in them too there were tears, such is the force of example with women. I had never seen her before, but I needed no ghost to tell me that she was Kenneth's sister.

"This is Elfie, Roger," said Fairy. "She wants to welcome you too. Elfie is my sister. I stole her. Oh! a sister is so much nicer than a great rough brother

who runs away!"

"And this," said Mrs. Goodal, leading forward a tall, spare gentleman, with that closely shaven face and quiet lip and eye that, with or without the conventional garb, stamp the Catholic priest all the world over—"this is our dear friend and father, the friend and father of all of us, Father Fenton."

There was a general pause at this introduction. I suppose that my countenance must have shown some perplexity, for a general laugh followed the pause. Mrs. Goodal

came to the rescue.

"You expected to meet Mr. Knowles, I suppose, sir, or the Abbot Iones. Kenneth has told me about the Abbot Jones. But you must know that the present Archdeacon Knowles is far too high and mighty a dignitary for Leighstone, and the abbot is laid up with the gout. Your father has not been to the Priory for a very long time—for so long a time that he thinks he would no longer be known there. The Herbert pew is very vacant; and Nellie has had no one to take Still mystified? You see what comes of silly boys running away from home and never writing. They miss all the news."

She led me to the other end of the parlor, and I stood before a lofty ivory crucifix. The light of tapers flashed upon the thin pale face; blood gleamed from the nailed hands and feet, from the pierced side, from the bowed and thorn-crowned head. It was the figure of "the Man of Sorrows," and the artist had thrown into the silent agony of the face an expression of infinite pity. My own heart bowed in silence.

"We are all Papists, Roger. What are you?" whispered Mrs. Goodal at my elbow.

"Nothing," I murmured. "No-

thing."

"Nothing yet," she whispered again. But do you think that we have all been praying to *Him* all this time for *nothing*?"

"And my father?"

"The most inveterate Papist of us all!"

There was a tone of triumph in her voice that was almost amusing. "How did it all come about?"

"She did it," broke in Kenneth, pointing to his mother. "Did I not tell you that she was the sweetest woman to have her own way? If I were a heretic, I would sooner face the Grand Inquisitor himself than this most amiable of women. Set a thief to catch a thief, Roger. But come; heretics don't abstain as do wicked creatures like these ladies. I forget, they do, though; and my heretic, fair ladies, has had nothing to eat all day; so I insist upon not another word until the fatted calf is disposed of by our returned prodigal."

That was a merry Christmas eve. We all nestled together, and bit by bit the whole story came out. On the receipt of my first letter, after a fruitless inquiry for me, Kenneth and his mother posted down to

Leighstone. Their arrival was most opportune; for my father, on hearing of my departure, suffered a relapse that laid him quite prostrate. Poor Nellie was in despair, brave heart though she was. By unremitting care he was partially restored, and then followed the long dreary months and the weary waiting, day after day, for some scrap of news from me. In such cases, the worst is generally dreaded save when the worst actually takes place, and my father drooped gradually. He was prevailed upon to pay a visit to the Goodals, and there it was that his heart, pierced with affliction, and bowed down with sorrow, opened to the holier and higher consolation that religion only affords. Father Fenton, who was invalided from a severe course of missionary labors, was staying with them, and the intercourse thus begun developed into what we have seen. On his return to Leighstone, the silent house opened up the bitter poignancy of his grief. Every familiar object on which his eye rested only served to remind him of one who had passed away; whom he accused himself of having driven away by an order that he could only now regard with A cold, something abhorrence. slight, seized him, and soon appeared alarming symptons. In view of the recent changes, Nellie knew not to whom of our relatives to apply in this emergency, and could only write to Mrs. Goodal, who flew to her assistance. The arrival of my letter brought down Kenneth, "like a madman," his mother said. The letter arrived just at the crisis of the fever in which my father lay; the good news was imparted to him in one of his lucid intervals, and the crisis took a favorable turn. The Christmas holy-days brought Elfie from her convent; and finally

all came together, awaiting my expected return. How that letter had been kissed, petted, wept over, laughed over, spelt out inch by inch! I wonder that a fragment of it remained; but even had it been worn to dust by reverent fingers, it would not have mattered: the women knew every word of it by heart. It formed the staple topic of conversation whenever they met. There never yet was such a letter written, and the idea that the writer of it should only receive ten dollars-how much money was ten dollars?—a week was proof positive that the American people did not appreciate true genius when it found its way among them. Mr. Culpepper, indeed! Who cared what he would think? The idea of a person of the name of Culpepper having to do with men of genius! They wondered how I could consent to write for such a person at all. Mrs. Jinks! Good gracious! that dreadful Mrs. Jinks and her "littery gents"; Mrs. Jinks and the beefsteak; Mrs. Jinks and the pork chops; Mrs. Jinks and her "mock turtle" soup; Mrs. Jinks and "her Jane," etc. etc. Poor old Roger! Poor, dear boy! How miserable it made them all, and yet how absurdly ridiculous it all was. made them laugh and cry in the same breath.

What a hero I had become! What was all my fancied triumph to this? What is all the success one can win in this world to the genuine love and the foolish adoration of the two or three hearts that made up our little world before we knew that great wide open beyond the boundary of our own quiet garden? And all this fuss and affection was poured out over me, who had run away from it, and thought of it so little while I was away. It

was, speaking reverently, like the precious ointment in the alabaster vase, broken and poured out over me, in the fond waste of love. Why, indeed, was this waste for me? This ointment was precious. and might have been sold for many pence and given to the poor-the poor of this great world, who were hungering and thirsting after just such love as this, that we who have it accept so placidly, and let it run and diffuse itself over us, and take no care, for is not the source from which it comes inexhaustible, as the widow's cruse of oil? But so it is, and so it will continue to be while human nature remains truly human nature. The good shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine sheep, will go after the one which was lost, and finding him, bear him on his own travelweary and travel-worn shoulders in triumph home. The father will kill the fatted calf for the prodigal who has lived riotously and wasted his inheritance, but the faint cry of whose repentant anguish is heard from afar off. The mother's heart will go out after the scapegrace son who is tramping the world alone, turned out of doors for misbehavior; and all the joy she feels in the good ones near her is as nothing compared with the thought that he at last has come back, sad and sorrowful and forlorn, to the home he left long ago, in the brightness of the morning, with so gay a step and so light a It is unjust, frightfully unjust, that it should be so. Did not the good son so feel it, and was his protest not right? Did not the laborers in the vineyard so find it when those who came at the eleventh hour, and had borne naught of the heat and the burden of the day, received the same reward as they? And who shall say

that the laborers were not right and the lord of the vineyard unjust? What trades-union could ever take into consideration such reasoning as this, forbidden by the very book of arithmetic? Wait awhile, friends. Some day when we, who now feel so keenly the injustice of it all, are fathers and mothers, let us put the ques-"Why tion then to ourselves: this waste of precious ointment on one who values it not? I will seal up the alabaster jar, let the ointment harden into stone, and no sweetness shall flow out of it." Do so-if you can, and the world will be a very barren place. It would dry and shrivel up under arid justice. Did not the Master tell us so? Did he not say that he came to call not the just but sinners to repentance? And is it not this very injustice that makes earth likest heaven, where we are told there shall be more joy over one sinner doing penance than over the ninety-nine just who need not penance?

And here am I preaching, instead of spending my Christmas merrily like a man. But the thought of all this affection wasted on so callous a wretch as I had proved myself to be, was too tempting to let pass. Suddenly the chimes rang out from the old steeples, and we were silent, listening with softened hearts and moistening eyes.

"There is another surprise for you yet;" said Mrs. Goodal, mysteriously. "Come, I want to show you your room."

She took me upstairs, paused a moment at the door to whisper: "It has another Occupant now, Kenneth. Go in and visit him," opened the door and pushed me gently in.

The room was lighted only by a little lamp, through which a low

flame burned with a rosy glow. The flame flickered and shone on an altar with a small tabernacle, before which Father Fenton was kneeling in silent prayer. My old room had been converted into a chapel, and there they had knelt and prayed for me. Presently the chapel was lighted up, and my father was assisted to a chair that had been prepared for him. Mr. Goodal took up his position near a harmonium, in one corner, while I retired into the other. One or two of the household came in and took their places quietly. Father Fenton rose up, and, assisted by Kenneth, vested himself, and the midnight Mass began. Soon the harmonium was heard, and then in tones that trembled at first, but in a moment cleared and grew firm and strong and glorious, Elfie, laughing Elfie, who now seemed transformed into one of those angels who brought the glad tidings long, long ago, burst forth into the Adeste Fideles.

> "Natum videte Regem angelorum."

All present joined in the refrain, Nellie's sweet voice mingling with the strong, manly tones of Kenneth. I saw his face light up as a soldier's of old might at a battle cry. How happy are the earnest!

Before the Mass was ended, Father Fenton turned and spoke a

few words:

"One of old said, 'When two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' I need not point out to you the solemn manner in which a few moments since he who made that promise fulfilled it, for he has spoken to your own hearts. But I would call your attention to the wonderful and special manner in which Christ has visited and blessed the two or three gathered

together here this night in his name. We are here like the shepherds of old, come to adore the Christ born in a manger. One by one have we dropped in, taken in hand and led gently, as though by the Lord himself. This great grace has not been given us for nothing. has been the answer to fervent, earnest, and unceasing prayer, which, though it may sometimes seem to knock at the gates of heaven a long while in vain, has been heard all the while, and at length, entering in, falls back on our hearts laden with gifts and with graces. The two or three have increased now by one, now by another, and under Providence are destined to increase until the Master calls them away unto himself. Happy is the one who comes himself to Christ, thrice happy he who helps to lead another! He it is who answers that bitter cry of anguish that rang out from the darkness and the suffering of Calvary—'I thirst.' He holds up the chalice to the lips of the dying Saviour filled with the virtues of a saved soul. It was for souls Christ thirsted, and he gives him to drink. But when a conversion is wrought, when a stray sheep is brought into the fold, the work is only begun. All the debt is not paid. It is well to be filled with gratitude for the wonderful favor of God in bringing us out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage into the land flowing with milk and honey, where the good shepherd attends sheep, where we draw water from the living fountain. We have left behind us the fleshpots of Egpyt. But there is ingratitude to be remembered and wiped out. weary years have we wandered in desert places seeking rest and finding none. Yet the voice of the shepherd was calling to us all the while. Peace, peace! Peace! to men of good-will has been ringing out of the heavens over the mountains of this world these long centuries, yet how many ears are deaf to the angels' song! The star in the East has arisen, has moved in the heavens, and stood over his cradle-the star of light and of knowledge - yet how many eyes have been blind to its lustre and its meaning. It is because it points to a lowly place. In Bethlehem of Judæa Christ is born, not in the city of the king; in a stable, not in the palace of Herod; in a manger he is laid, wrapped in swaddlingclothes, not in the purple of royal-He is lowly; we would be great. He is meek; we would be proud. He is a little innocent child; we would be wise among the children of men. The birth-place of Christianity is humility. We must begin there, low down, for he himself has said it: 'Suffer little children to come unto me'; 'Unless ye become as one of these little ones, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'

"My brethren, my dear children, little flock whom Christ has visited really and truly in his body and blood, soul and divinity, this is our lesson—to be humble as he is. In this was his church founded on this memorable night, at this solemn hour, while day and night are in conflict. The day dawned on the new birth and the night was left for ever behind. There is no longer excuse for being children of the darkness, for the light of the world has dawned at length. It dawned in lowliness, poverty, suffering-these are its surroundings. Christ's first worshippers on this earth were the one who bore him and her spouse, Joseph the carpenter. His second,

the poor shepherds, whose watchful ears heard first the song of peace. The kings from afar off followed who were looking and praying for light from heaven, and it came. The angels guided the ignorant shepherds to where he lay; but of those to whom more was given, more was expected. The gifts of intellect, learning, and the spirit of inquiry are gifts of God, not of man, or of Satan. They are to be used for God, not sharpened against him. Happy are those to whom he has given them, who, like the Kings of the East, though far away from the lowly place where he lies, hearken to the voice of God calling to them over the wildernesses that intervene, and make answer to the divine call. Search in the right spirit-search in the spirit of humility, and honesty, and truth. To them will the star of Truth appear to guide them aright over many dangers and difficulties, and disasters mayhap, to the stable where Christ is sleeping, to lay at his feet the gifts and offerings he gave them —the gold of faith, the frankincense of hope, the myrrh of charity."

I suppose it is intended that sermons should apply to all who hear them. That being the case, how could Father Fenton's words apply to me? There was not a single direct allusion to me throughout. What he said might apply equally to all, and yet surely of all there I was the most guilty. I alone did not adore; and why? After all, was humility the birthplace of Christianity? But was not I humble as the rest of them? "You! who are so fond of mounting those stilts," whispered Roger Herbert senior-"you, who spend your days and nights dreaming of the divinus afflatus-you, who would give half your life, were it yours to give, to convert those little stilts into a genuine monument, and for what purpose? That men might point and look up at the dizzy height and say, Behold Roger Herbert, the mighty, his feet on earth, his head among the gods of heaven!" And was it true that Truth had been speaking all this time, all these centuries, to so little purpose? Why was it? how could it be if the voice was divine? "The devil, the world, and the flesh, Roger; forget not the devil, the world, and the flesh. Were there only truth, we should all be of one mind; but unfortunately, truth is confronted with falsehood." What is truth—what is truth? Av, the old agony of the world. One alone of all that world dared to tell us that he was the Truth, he was the Way, he was the Life. "Let us find him, Roger. Father Fenton says he is in the midst of those gathered together in his name."

Christmas passed, and a New Year dawned on us-a happy new year to all except myself. I was the only unhappy being at the Grange. Elfie went back to her convent school. My father's health was on the high road to restoration, and the growing attachment between Kenneth and Nellie was evident even to my purblind vision. Strange to say, I did not like to talk to Kenneth as openly as at first about my doubts and difficulties, and Father Fenton's company, when alone, I avoided, although he was the most amiable of men, gifted with wit softened by piety, and a learning that not even his modesty could conceal. He must have observed how studiously I shunned him, for, after seeking ineffectually once or twice to draw me into serious conversation, he refrained, and only spoke on ordinary topics. I began to grow restless again.

The season had advanced into an early spring; the green was already abroad and the birds beginning to come, when one afternoon, that seemed to have strayed out of summer, so soft and balmy was the air, Nellie and I sat together out on the lawn as in the old days. My father was taking a nap within; the Goodals had driven to Gnaresbridge to meet a friend whom they expected to pass by the up-town train to London. Nellie was working at something, and I was musing in silence. Suddenly she said:

"Roger, do you remember the promises you made me the night

before you ran away?"

"Yes, Fairy."

"Well, sir?" "Well, madam?"

" Is that all?"

"Is what all?"

"Do you only remember your promise?"

"Is not that a great deal?"

"No; unless you have kept it."

"Ah-h-h!"

"What do you mean by ah—h?"

"What did I promise?"

"That from that day forward you would not only try not to do harm, but to do some good for others as well as for yourself."

"That is a very big promise."

"No bigger now than it was

"But it means more now than it did then."

"Not a bit, not a bit, not a bit!"

"Things look to me so differently now. One grows so much older in a year sometimes."

"Then you have not kept your

promise? O Roger!"

"Good, though you can spell it in four letters, is a very large word, Nellie, and means so much; and others mean so many. Not to do much harm is one thing; but to do

good, not once in a while, but to be constant in it—that is another thing, Nellie, and that was what I promised. That promise I cannot say I have kept."

Nellie bent her head lower over her work, and I believe I saw some tears fall, but she said nothing. I

went on:

"Now Kenneth does good." There was no mistake about the tears this time, although the head bent a little lower still. "Kenneth does a great deal of good. He goes about among the poor as regularly as a physician, and whatever his medicine may be it seems to do them more good than any they can get at the druggist's. He has sent I don't know how many youngsters off to school, where he pays for them. In fact, he seems to me to be always scheming and thinking about others and never dreaming of himself, whereas I am always scheming and thinking about myself and never seem to see anybody else in the world. Why, what are you doing with that stuff in your hands, Nellie? You are sewing it anyhow."

"O Roger! You— you—" she could say no more, but hid her face, that was rosy and pure as the dawn,

on my breast.

"A very pretty picture," said a deep voice behind us, and Nellie started away from me, while all the blood rushed back to her heart. She was so white that Kenneth—for it was he who had stolen up unobserved at the moment—was frightened, and said:

"Pardon me, Miss Herbert, if I have startled you. I have only this instant come, and quite forgot that the grass silenced the sound of my footsteps. Take this chair—shall I

bring a glass of water?"

"No, thank you; I am better

now. It was only a moment. We did not hear you."

"May I join you, then? Or was

it a tête-à-tête ?"

"No; sit down, Kenneth. The fact is, we were just discussing the character of an awful scamp."

"Who arrived just too late to hear any evil of himself—is that

it ?"

"No, he was here all the time," said Nellie, laughing, and herself

again.

"But what brings you from Gnaresbridge so soon, Kenneth, and all alone? Where have you left Mr. and Mrs. Goodal?"

"Mrs. Goodal had some shopping to do at Gnaresbridge, and Mr. Goodal, as in duty bound, waited patiently the results of that interesting operation. His patience makes me blush for mine. The shopping is such a very extensive operation that I preferred a walk back, and even now you see I have arrived before them."

"How very ungallant, Mr. Goodal! I am surprised at you. I thought Roger was the only gentleman who

didn't like shopping."

"On the contrary, I am quite fond of it. I used to do all my own shopping in New York. I got Mrs. Jinks to buy me some things once, but as she, woman-like, measured everybody by Mr. Jinks, the articles, though an excellent fit for him, were an abomination on me."

"And what did you do with

them?"

"What could I do with them? Gave them to Mrs. Jinks, of course, and for the future did my own shopping. Indeed, I am getting quite lazy here. There is nothing for a fellow to do—is there, Kenneth?"

"I was thinking of that as I came along."

"Thinking of what?"

"The great puzzle—What to do. I put it in every imaginable form. The question was this: 'Kenneth Goodal, what are you going to do with yourself?' and the whole eight miles passed before I could arrive at anything like a satisfactory conclusion. I finally resolved to leave the question to arbitration, and get others to decide for me. I have already applied to one."

He paused, and his gaze was fixed on the ground. His face was flushed, and his broad brow knitted as though trying to find the right clue to a puzzling query. I glanced at Nellie, and observed that her face had whitened again, while her eyes were also bent upon the ground, and her breath came and went

painfully.

"Yes," he went on without raising his head—Nellie was seated between us—"I determined to leave my case to arbitration. Your father was one of the arbiters; you were to be another, Roger; and a certain young lady was to be a third. I had intended to attack the members of this high court of arbitration singly; but as I find two of them here together, I see no reason why I should not receive my verdict at once. ..."

A further report of this most important and interesting case it is not for me to give, inasmuch as I was not present. I saw at once that the decision rested now with the third arbiter, and that my opinion was practically valueless in the matter. How the case proceeded I cannot tell. Thinking that there was little for me to do, and how deeply engaged were the other two parties, I took advantage of the noiseless grass to slink away without attracting the attention of either, heartily ashamed of myself for be-

ing so persistent an intruder where it was clear I was not particularly wanted. It was a lovely evening, and I took a long quiet ramble all by myself. How much longer the court was in session I do not know, I only know that it was broken up before I entered, just in time for dinner. I noticed that in my father's eyes there was a softer look than usual; that Mrs. Goodal took Nellie's place at table, opposite to my father; that Mr. Goodal and myself were neighbors, while opposite to us sat the adjourned court of arbitration, looking-looking as young persons look only once in their lives. There was a rather awkward silence on my entrance, which I found so unpleasant that I rattled away all through dinner. must have been excellent company for once in my life; for though at this moment I do not recollect a single sentence that I uttered, there was so much laughter throughout the dinner, laughter that grew and grew until we found ourselves all talking at length, all joining in, all joking, all so merry that we were astounded to find how the evening had passed. My father looked quite young again.

As I was retiring to my own room for the night, Nellie caught me, put both her arms around my neck, and looked up into my eyes a long time without saying a word, until at last she seemed to find in them something she was looking for, and when. kissing her, I asked if I should blow the candle out again, as I did on a former memorable confession, she flew away, her face lost amid blushes, laughter, and tears. I was congratulating myself on seeing an end. to a long day, when a guilty tap came to my door, and Kenneth stole in with the air of a burglar who purposed making for the first

valuable he could lay hands on, and vanishing with it through the window. He closed the door as cautiously as though a policeman, whom he feared to disturb, was napping without, and sat down without saying a word. I looked at the ceiling; he sat and stared at me. In his turn, he began examining my eyes. I could bear it no longer, but burst out laughing, and held out my hand, which he almost crushed in his.

"You are as true a knight as ever was old Sir Roger," said Kenneth, wringing my hand till I cried out with pain. "I went on talking for I don't know how long, and saying I forget now what, but, on looking up, I found there was only one listener. Well, we did without you."

"So now you know what to do with yourself. Happy man! What a pity Elfie is only fourteen! She might tell me what to do with Roger Herbert."

I saw the two who, after my father, I loved the best in all the world made one. I waited until they returned from the bridal trip, by which time my father was fully restored to health. We spent that season in London, and when it was over returned to Leighstone. The brown hand of autumn was touching the

woods, when one morning I began packing my trunk again, and that same evening ate my last dinner at the Grange. It was not a pleasant dinner. The ladies were in tears at times, and the gentlemen were inclined to be taciturn. I did my best to rally the party as on a former occasion, but the effort was not

very successful. "Oh! you are all Sybarites here," was my closing rejoinder to all queries, tears, and complaints; "and I should never do anything among you. Not so fortunate as Kenneth, who has found some one to tell him what to do with himself, I am driven back on my own resources, and must work out that interesting problem for myself. I was advancing in that direction when called away. I go back to resume my labors in the old way. You cannot realize the delicious feeling that comes over one at times who is struggling all alone, and groping in the darkness towards a great light that he sees afar off and hopes to reach. I leave my father with a better son than I, and my sister with something that even sisters prefer to brothers. I am only restless here. There is work to be done beyond there. I may be making a mistake: if so, I shall come back and let you know."

FLYWHEEL BOB,

By the Author of "Romance of Charter Oak," "Pride of Lexington," Etc., Etc.

Down in a dismal cellar, so poorly lighted, indeed, that you could scarce distinguish his tiny figure when it came into the world, Bob was born. Our little hero began life where we all must end it-underground; and certainly many a burial-vault might have seemed a less grimy, gloomy home than his. But Bob's wretchedness being coeval with his birth, he never knew what it was to be otherwise than wretched. He cried and crowed pretty much like other infants, and his mother declared he was the finest child ever born in this cellar. "And, O darling!" she sighed more than once, while he snugged to her bosom—"O darling! if you could stay always what you are." It was easy to feed him, easy to care for him, now. How would he fare along the rugged road winding through the misty future?

Nothing looked so beautiful to his baby eyes as the golden streak across the floor which appeared once a day for a few minutes; and as soon as he was able to creep he moved towards it and tried to catch it, and wondered very much when the streak faded away.

Bob's only playmate was a poodle dog, who loved the sunshine too, and was able at first to get more of it than he; and the child always whimpered when Pin left him to go bask on the sidewalk. But by and by, when he grew older, he followed his dumb friend up the steps, and would sit for hours beside him; and the dog was very fond of his little master, if we may judge by the constant wagging of his bushy tail.

When Bob was four years old his mother died. This was too young an age for him to comprehend what had happened. It surprised him a little when they carried the body away: and when she breathed her last words: "I am going, dear one; I wish I could take you with me," he answered: "Going where, mammy?" "When is mammy coming home?" he asked of several persons who lodged in the cellar with him, and stayed awake the first night a whole hour waiting for her to return. But ere long Bob ceased to think about his mother, and in the course of a month 'twas as if she had never been; there was rather more space in the underground chamber than before, and now he had all the blanket to himself.

Thus we see that the boy began early the battle of life. When he felt hungry, he would enter a baker's shop near by, and stretch forth his puny hand; and sometimes he was given a morsel of bread, and sometimes he was not. But Bob was too spirited to lie down and starve. So, when the baker shook his head, saying, "You come here too often," he watched a chance and stole peanuts from the stand on the corner. The Ten Commandments did not trouble him in the least: for he had never heard of them. Bob only knew that there was a day in the week when the baker looked more solemn than on other days, and when the streets were less crowded.

The one thing in the world Bob cherished was Pin. And the feeling was mutual; for not seldom, when the dog discovered a bone or crust of bread among the rubbishheaps, he would let himself be deprived of the treasure without even a growl. Then, when Christmas came round, Bob and the poodle would stand by the shop-windows and admire the toys together; and the child would talk to his pet, and tell him that this was a doll and that a Noe's ark. Once he managed to possess himself of a toy which a lady let drop on the sidewalk. But he did not keep it long; for another urchin offered him a dime for it, which Bob accepted, then forthwith turned the money into gingerbread, which he shared with Pin.

Such was the orphan's childhood. He was only one vagrant amid thousands of others. In the great beehive of humanity his faint buzz was unheard, and he was crowded out of sight by the swarm of other bees. Still, there he was, a member of the hive; moving about and struggling for existence; using his sting when he needed it, and getting what honey he could. When the boy was in his seventh year, a

misfortune befell him which really smote his heart—the poodle disappeared. And now, for the first time in his life, Bob shed tears. He inquired of everybody in the tenement-house if they had seen him: he put the same query to nearly every inhabitant of Mott Street. But all smiled as they answered: "In a big city like New York a lost dog is like a needle in a haystack." Many a day did Bob pass seeking his friend. He wandered to alleys and squares where he had never been before, calling out, "Pin! Pin!" but no Pin came. Then, when night arrived and he lay down alone in his blanket, he felt lonely indeed. Poor child! It was hard to lose the only creature on earth that he loved-the only creature on earth, too, that loved him. "I'll never forget you," he sighed-"never forget you." And sometimes, when another dog would wag his tail and try to make friends, Bob would shake his head and say: "No, no, you're not my lost Pin."

It took a twelvementh to become reconciled to this misfortune. But Time has broad wings, and on them Time bore away Bob's grief, as it bears away all our griefs; otherwise, one sorrow would not be able to make room for another sorrow, and we should sink down and die beneath our accumulated burdens.

We have styled Bob a vagrant. Here we take the name back, if aught of bad be implied in it. It was not his fault that he was born in a cellar; and if he stole peanuts and other things, 'twas only when hunger drove him to it. Doubtless, had he first seen the light in Fifth Avenue, he would have known ere this how to spell and say his prayers; might have

gone, perhaps, to many a children's party, with kid gloves on his delicate hands and a perfumed handkerchief for his sensitive little nose. But Bob was not born in Fifth Avenue. He wore barely clothes enough to cover his nakedness. His feet, like his hands, had never known covering of any sort; they were used to the mud and the snow, and once a string of red drops along the icy pavement helped to track him to his den after he had been committing a theft. In this case, however, the blood which flowed from his poor foot proved a blessing in disguise, for Bob spent the coldest of the winter months in the lock-up: clean straw, a dry floor, regular meals—what a happy month!

As for not being able to read—why, if a boy in such ragged raiment as his were to show himself at a public school, other boys would jeer at him, and the pedagogue eye him askance.

But Bob proved the metal that was in him by taking, when he was just eight years of age, a place in a factory. "Yes," he said to the man who brought him there, "I'd rather work than be idle."

It were difficult to describe his look of wonder when he first entered the vast building. seemed to be no end of people-old men, young men, and children like himself, all silent and busy. Around them, above them, on every side of them, huge belts of leather, and rods of iron, and wheels and cog-wheels were whirring, darting in and out of holes, clearing this fellow's head by a few inches, grazing that one's back so close that, if he chanced to faint or drop asleep, off in an eye's twinkle the machinery would whirl him, rags, bones, and flesh making one ghastly pulp together.

the air was full of a loud, mournful hum, like ten thousand sighs and groans. Presently Bob sat down on a bench; then, like a good boy, tried to perform the task set for him. But he could only stare at the big flywheel right in front of him and close by; and so fixed and prolonged was his gaze that, by common consent, the operatives christened him Flywheel Bob. Next day, however, he began work in earnest, and it was not long ere he became the best worker of them all.

When Bob was an infant, we remember, he used to creep toward the sun-streak on the cellar floor, and cry when it faded away.

Now, although the building where he toiled twelve hours a day was gloomy and depressing, and the sunshine a godsend to the spirits, the boy never lifted his eyes for a single moment when it shimmered through the sooty windows. At his age one grows apace; one is likewise tender and easily moulded into well-nigh any shape.

So, like as the insect, emerging from the chrysalis, takes the color of the leaf or bark to which it clings, Bob grew more and more like unto the soulless machinery humming round him. If whispered to, he made no response. When toward evening his poor back would feel weary, no look of impatience revealed itself on his countenance. If ever he heaved a sigh, no ears heard it, not even his own; and the foreman declared that he was a model boy for all the other boys to imitate—so silent, so industrious, so heartily co-operating with the wheels and cog-wheels, boiler, valves, and steam; in fact, he was the most valuable piece in the whole complicated machinery.

Bob was really a study. There

are children who look forward to happy days to come; who often, too, throw their mind's eye backward on the Christmas last gone by. This Bob never did. His past had no Santa Claus, his present had none, his future had none. It were difficult to say what life did appear to him, as day after day he bent over his task. Mayhap he never indulged in thoughts about himself -what he had been, what he was, what he might become Certainly. if we may judge by the vacant, leaden look into which his features ere long crystallized, Bob was indeed what the foreman said—a bit of the machinery. And more and more akin to it he grew as time rolled by. Bob had never beheld it except in motion; and on Sundays, when he was forced to remain idle, his arm would ever and anon start off on a wild, crazy whirl; round and round and round it would go: whereupon the other children would laugh and shout: "Hi! ho! Look at Flywheel Bob!"

The child's fame spread. In the course of time Richard Goodman, the owner of the factory, heard of him. This gentleman, be it known, was subject to the gout; at least, he gave it that name, which sounded better than rheumatism, for it smacked of family, of gentle birth; though, verily, if such an ailment might be communicated through a proboscis, there was not enough old Madeira in his veins to have given a mosquito the gout.

When thus laid up, Mr. Goodman was wont to send for his superintendent to inquire how business was getting on; and it was upon one of these occasions that he first heard of Bob. Although not a person given to enthusiasm, not even when expressing himself on the

subject of money-money, which lay like a little gold worm in the core of his heart-he became so excited when he was told about the model child, who never smiled, who never sulked, who never asked for higher wages, that the foreman felt a little alarm; for he had never seen his employer's eyes glisten as they did now, and even the pain in his left knee did not prevent Mr. Goodman from rising up out of the easy-chair to give vent to his emotion. "Believe me," he exclaimed, "this child is the beginning of a new race of children. Believe me, when our factories are filled by workers like him, then we'll have no more strikes; strikes will be extinguished for ever!" Here Mr. Goodman sank down again in the chair, then, pulling out a silk handkerchief, wiped his forehead. But presently his brow contracted. "There is some talk," he continued, " of introducing a bill in the legislature to exclude all children from factories under ten years of age. Would such a bill exclude my model boy?"

"I can't say whether it would," replied the manager. "Bob may beten, or a little under, or a little over. I don't think he'll changemuch from what he is, not if he lives. fifty years. His face looks just like something that has been hammered into a certain shape that it can't get out of."

"And they talk, too, of limiting the hours of work to ten per day for children between ten and sixteen years," went on Mr. Goodman, still frowning; "and, what's more, the bill requires three months' dayschooling or six months' night-schooling. I declare, if this bill becomes a law, I'll retire from business. The public has no right to interfere with my employment of labor. It is sheer tyranny."

"Well, it would throw labor considerably out of gear," remarked the superintendent; "for there are a hundred thousand children employed in the shops and factories of this city and suburbs."

"But, no; the bill sha'n't pass!" exclaimed Mr. Goodman, thumping his fist on the table. "Why, what's the use of a lobby, if such a bill can

go through?"

Here the foreman smiled, whereupon his employer gave a responsive smile; then pulling the bell, "Now," said the latter, "let us drink the model boy's health." In a few minutes there appeared a decanter of sherry. "Here's to Flywheel Bob!" cried Mr. Goodman, holding up his glass.

"To Flywheel Bob!" repeated the other; and they both tossed

off the wine.

"Flywheel Bob! Why, what a funny name!" spoke a low, silvery voice close by. Mr. Goodman turned hastily round, and there, at the threshold of the study, stood a little girl, with a decidedly pert air, and a pair of lustrous black eyes fixed full upon him; they seemed to say: "I know you told me not to enter here, yet here I am." A profusion of ringlets rippled down her shoulders, and on one of her slender fingers glittered a gold ring.

"Daisy, you have disobeyed me," said her father, trying to appear stern; "and, what is more, you

glide about like a cat."

"Do I?" said Daisy, smiling.
"Well, pa, tell me who Flywheel
Bob is; then I'll go away."

"Something down at my factory—a little toy making pennies for you. There, now, retire, darling, retire."

"A little toy? Then give me Flywheel Bob; I want a new play-

thing," pursued the child, quite heedless of the command to with-draw.

"Well, I'd like to know how many toys you want?" said Mr. Goodman impatiently. "You've had dear knows how many dolls since Christmas."

"Nine, pa."

"And pray, what has become of them all, miss?"

"Given away to girls who didn't

get any from Santa Claus."

"I declare! she's her poor dear mother over again," sighed the widower. "Margaret would give away her very shoes and stockings

to the poor."

The sigh had barely escaped his lips when the foreman burst into a laugh, and presently Mr. Goodman laughed too; for, lo! peeping from behind the girl's silk frock was the woolly head of a poodle. In his mouth was a doll with one arm broken off, hair done up in curls like Daisy's, and a bit of yellow worsted twined around one of the fingers to take the place of a ring. "Humph! I don't wonder you've had nine dolls in five months," ejaculated Mr. Goodman after he had done laughing. "Rover, it seems, plays with them too; then tears them up."

"Well, pa, he is tired of dolls now, and wants Flywheel Bob;

and so do I."

"I wish I hadn't mentioned the boy's name," murmured Mr. Goodman. Then aloud: "Daisy dear, I am going out for a drive by and by; which way shall we go? To the Park?"

"No; to Tiffany's to have my ears pierced." At this he burst

into another laugh.

"Why, pa, I'm almost ten, and old enough for earrings," added Daisy, tossing her head and making the pretty ringlets fly about in all directions.

"Well, well, darling; then we will go to Tiffany's."

"And afterwards, pa, we'll get Flywheel Bob."

"Oh! hush, my love. You cannot have him."

"Him! Is he a little boy, pa?"
Mr. Goodman did not answer.
"Well, whatever Flywheel Bob
is," she continued, "I want a new
plaything. This doll Rover broke
all by accident. And I scolded
you hard; didn't I, Rover?"
Here she patted the dog's head.
"But, pa, he sha'n't hurt Flywheel
Bob."

"Well, well, we'll drive out in half an hour," said her parent, who would fain have got the notion of Flywheel Bob out of his child's head, yet feared it might stick there.

"In half an hour," repeated Daisy, feeling the tips of her ears, while her eyes sparkled like the jewels which were shortly to adorn them. Then, going to the bell, she gave a ring. Mr. Goodman, of course, imagined that it was to order the carriage. But when the domestic appeared, Daisy quietly said: "Jane, I wish the boned turkey brought here." No use to protest—to tell the child that this room was his own private business room, and not the place for luncheon.

In the boned turkey was brought, despite Mr. Goodman's sighs. But it was well-nigh more than he could endure when presently, after carving off three slices, she bade Rover sit up and beg.

In an instant the poodle let the doll drop, then, balancing himself on his haunches, gravely opened his mouth. "He never eats anything except boned turkey," observed Daisy in answer to her father's look of displeasure. "Bones are

bad for his teeth." Then, while her pet was devouring the dainty morsels: "Pa," she went on, "you haven't yet admired Rover's blue ribbon."

"Umph! he certainly doesn't look at all like the creature he was when you bought him three years ago," answered Mr. Goodman.

"Well, pa, this summer I will not go to the White Mountains. Remember!"

"Why not?" inquired Mr. Goodman, who failed to discern any possible connection between the poodle and this charming summer resort.

"Because I want surf-bathing for Rover. I love to throw your cane into the big waves, then see him rush after it and jump up and down in the foam. This season we must go to Long Branch." Her father made no response, but turned to address a parting word to the superintendent, who presently took leave, highly amused by the child's bold, pert speeches.

"Now, Daisy, for our drive," said Mr. Goodman, rising stiffly out of the arm-chair.

But he had only got as far as the door when another visitor was announced. It proved to be a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—a society which has already done much good, and whose greatest enemy is the ill-judged zeal of some of its own members.

"What on earth can he want?" thought Mr. Goodman, motioning to the gentleman to take a seat.

"I am come, sir," began the latter, "to inquire whether you would accept the position of president of our society? We have much to contend with, and gentlemen like yourself—gentlemen of wealth and influence in the community—are needed to assist us."

Mr. Goodman, who in reality cared not a rush how animals were treated, yet was ambitious to be known as a citizen of influence, bowed and replied: "I feel highly honored, sir, and am willing to become your president." Then, filling anew the wine-glasses, he called out:

"Here is success and prosperity to-"

"Flywheel Bob," interrupted Daisy. "For, pa, he is a little boy, isn't he? A little boy making

pennies?"

Mr. Goodman frowned, while the child laughed and Rover barked. But presently the toast to the society was duly honored, after which the visitor proceeded to speak of several cruel sports which he hoped would soon be put a stop to. "Turkey-matches on Thanksgiving day must be legislated against, Mr. President." Mr. President bowed and waved his hand. "And there is talk, sir, of introducing fox-chases, as in England. This sport must likewise be prevented by law." Another bow and wave of the hand.

"Well, pa, you sha'n't stop me killing flies; for flies plague Rover," put in Daisy, with a malicious twin-

kle in her eye.

Again the poodle barked. Then, clapping her hands, off she flew to get her hat and gloves, leaving the gentlemen smiling at this childish remark.

"My darling," said Mr. Goodman a quarter of an hour later, as they were driving down Fifth Avenue together—"my darling, I have been placed at the head of another society—a society to prevent cruelty to animals."

'I am glad," replied Daisy, looking up in his face. "Everybody

likes you, pa; don't they?"

Daisy, let us here observe, was

the rich man's only child. His wife was dead; but whenever he gazed upon the little fairy at this moment seated beside him, he seemed to behold his dear Margaret anew: the same black eyes, the same wilful, imperious, yet withal tenderly affectionate ways. No wonder that Richard Goodman idolized his daughter. To no other living being did he unbend, did his heart ever quicken.

But to Daisy he did unbend. He loved to caress her, to talk to her, too, about matters and things which she could hardly understand. And she would always listen and appear very pleased and interested. Search the whole city of New York, and you would not have found another of her age with so much tact when she chose to play the little lady, nor a better child, either, considering how thoroughly she had been spoilt. If Daisy was a tyrant, she was a very loving one indeed, and none knew this better than her father and the poodle, who is now perched on the front cushion of the barouche, looking scornfully down at the curs whom he passes, and saying to himself: "What a lucky dog I am!"

"I am sure the Society to prevent Cruelty to Animals will do good," observed Daisy, after holding up her finger a moment and telling Rover to sit straight. "But, pa, is Flywheel Bob an animal or a toy? Or is he really a little boy, as I guessed awhile ago?"

"There it comes again," murmured Mr. Goodman. Then, with a slight gesture of impatience, he answered: "A boy, my love, a boy."

"Well, what a funny name, pa! Oh! I'm glad we're going to see him."

"No, dear, we are going to Tiffany's—to Tiffany's, in order to have

your darling ears pierced and elegant earrings put in them."

"I know it, pa, but I ordered James to drive first to the factory."

No use to protest. The coachman drove whither he was bidden. But not a little surprised was he, when they arrived, to see his young mistress alight instead of his master.

"I am too lame with gout to accompany her," whispered Mr. Goodman to the foreman, who presently made his appearance. "It is an odd whim of hers. Don't keep her long, and take great care about the machinery."

"I'll be back soon, pa," said Daisy—"very soon." With this she and Rover entered the big, cheerless edifice, which towered like a giant high above all the surrounding houses.

"Now, Miss Goodman, keep close to me and walk carefully," said her guide.

"Let me hold your hand," said the child, who already began to feel excited as the first piece of machinery came in view. Then, pausing at the threshold of floor number one, "Oh! what a noise," she cried, "and what a host of people! Which one is Flywheel Bob?"

"Yonder he sits, miss," replied the superintendent, pointing to the curved figure of a boy—we might better say child; for, in the two and a half years since we last met him, Bob has hardly grown a quarter of an inch. "Why doesn't he sit straight?" asked Daisy, approaching him.

"Because, miss, Bob minds his task."

"Well, he does indeed; for he hasn't looked at me once, while all the rest are staring."

"You are the first young lady that

has ever honored us by a visit," answered the foreman.

"Am I?" exclaimed Daisy, not a little gratified to have so many eyes fastened upon her. At children's parties, pretty as she was, she had rivals; here there were And now, as she moved none. daintily along, with her glossy curls swaying to and fro, and her sleeves not quite hiding the gold bracelets on her snowy wrists, she formed indeed a bewitching picture. sently they arrived beside Flywheel Bob; then Daisy stopped and surveyed him attentively, wondering why he still refused to notice "How queerly he behaves!" she said inwardly, "and how pale he is! I wonder what he gets to eat? His fingers are like spiders' claws. I'd rather be Rover than Bob." While she thus soliloquized the poodle kept snuffing at the boy's legs, and his tail, which at first had evinced no sign of emotion, was now wagging slowly from side to side, like as one who moves with doubt and deliberation. Mayhap strange thoughts were flitting through Rover's head at this moment. Perchance dim memories were being awakened of a damp abode underground; of a baby twisting knots in his shaggy coat; of hard times, when a half-picked bone was a feast. Who knows? But while the dog poked his nose against the boy's ragged trowsers, while his tail wagged faster and faster, while his mistress said to herself: "I'll tell pa about poor Bob, and he shall come to Long Branch with us," the object of her pity continued as unmoved by the attention bestowed on him as if he had been that metal rod flashing back and forth in yon cylinder.

"How many hours does Bob work?" inquired Daisy, moving away and drawing Rover along by the ear; for Rover seemed unwilling to depart.

"Twelve, miss," replied the fore-

man.

"Twelve!" repeated Daisy, lifting her eyebrows. "Does he really? Why, I don't work two. My governess likes to drive in the Park, and so do I; and we think two hours long enough."

"Well, I have seen him, pa," said Daisy a few minutes later, as she and her father were driving

away.

"Have you? Humph! then I suppose we may now go to Tiffany's," rejoined Mr. Goodman

somewhat petulantly.

"And, pa, Flywheel Bob isn't a bit like any other boy I have ever seen. Why, he is all doubled up; his bony fingers move quick, quick, ever so quick; his eyes keep always staring at his fingers, and"—here an expression of awe shadowed the child's bright face a moment—"and really, pa, I thought he said 'hiss-s-s' when the steam-pipe hissed."

"Humph!" ejaculated the manufacturer. Then, after a pause: "Well, now, my dear, let us talk about something else—about your earrings; which shall they be, pearls or diamonds?"

"Diamonds, pa, for they shine prettier." Then clapping her hands: "Oh! wouldn't it surprise Bob if I gave him a holiday? He is making pennies for me, isn't he? You said so this morning. Well, pa, I have pennies enough, so Bob shall play awhile; he shall come to Long Branch."

"My daughter, do not be silly," said Mr. Goodman.

"Silly! Why, pa, if Rover likes surf-bathing, I'm sure Flywheel Bob'll like it too." "He is too good a boy to idle away his time, my love."

"Well, but, pa, I heard you say that bathing was so healthy; and Bob doesn't look healthy."

"Thank heavens! here we are at Tiffany's," muttered Mr. Goodman when presently the carriage came to a stop. But before his daughter descended he took her hand and said: "Daisy, you love me, do you not?"

Love you, pa? Of course I do." And to prove it the child pressed her lips to his cheek.

"Then, dearest, please not to speak any more about Flywheel Bob; otherwise your governess will think you are crazy, and so will everybody else who hears you."

"Crazy!" cried Daisy, opening her eyes ever so wide. Then turning up her little, saucy nose: "Well, pa, I don't care what Mam'selle thinks!"

"But you care about what *I* think?" said Mr. Goodman, still retaining her hand; for she seemed ready to fly away.

"Oh! indeed I do."

"Then I request you not to mention Flywheel Bob any more."

"Really?" And Daisy gazed earnestly in his face, while astonishment, anger, love, made her own sweet countenance for one moment a terrible battle-field. It was all she spoke; in another moment she and Rover were within the splendid marble store.

As soon as she was gone Mr. Goodman drew a long breath. Yet he could not bear to be without his daughter, even for ever so short a time; and now she was scarcely out of sight when he felt tempted to hobble after her. He worshipped Daisy. But who did not? She was the life of his home. Without her it would have been sombre indeed;

for No. — Fifth Avenue was a very large mansion, and no other young person was in it besides herself. But Daisy made racket enough for six, despite her French governess, who would exclaim fifty times a day: "Mademoiselle Marguerite, vous vous comportez comme une bourgeoise." If an organ-grinder passed under the window, the window was thrown open in a trice, and down poured a handful of coppers; and happy was the monkey who climbed up to that window-sill, for the child would stuff his red cap with sugar and raisins, and send him off grinning as he had never grinned before.

"O darling! do hurry back," murmured Mr. Goodman, while he waited in the carriage, longing for her to reappear. At length she came, and the moment she was beside him again he gave her an embrace; then the rich man drove home, feeling very, very happy.

But not so Daisy. And this afternoon she stood a whole hour by the window, looking silently out. In vain the itinerant minstrel played his finest tunes; she seemed deaf to the music. Rover, too, looked moody and not once wagged his tail; nor when dinner-time came would he touch a mouthful of anything-which, however, did not surprise the governess, who observed: "Ma foi! l'animal ne fait que manger." But when a whole week elapsed, and Daisy still remained pensive, her father said: "You need change of air, my love; so get your things ready. To-morrow we'll be off for Long Branch."

"So soon!" exclaimed Daisy. It

was only the first of June.

"Why, my pet, don't you long to throw my cane into the waves, to see Rover swim after it?" Then, as she made no response, "Daisy," he went on, "why do you not laugh and sing and be like you used to be? Tell me what is the matter."

Without answering, Daisy looked down at the poodle, who turned his eyes up at her and faintly moved his tail.

"Yes, yes; I see you need a change," continued Mr. Goodman. "So to-morrow we'll be off for the seaside. There I know you will laugh and be happy."

"Is Flywheel Bob happy?" murmured the child under her breath.

"A little louder, dear one, a little louder. I didn't catch those last words."

"You asked me, pa, not to speak of Flywheel Bob to you; so I only spoke about him to myself."

"Well, I do declare!" exclaimed Mr. Goodman in a tone of utter amazement; then, after staring at her for nearly a minute, he rose up and passed into his private room, thinking what a very odd being Daisy was. "She is her poor, dear mother over again," he muttered. "I never could quite understand Margaret, and now I cannot understand Daisy."

Mr. Goodman had not been long in his study when a visitor was announced. The one who presently made his appearance was as unlike the benevolent and scrupulous gentleman who came here once to beg the manufacturer to become president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals—as unlike him, we repeat, as a man could possibly be.

This man's name was Fox; and verily there was something of his namesake about him. Explain it as we may, we do occasionally meet with human beings bearing a mysterious resemblance to some one of the lower animals; and if Mr. Fox could only have dwindled in size,

then dropped on his hands and knees, we should have fired at him without a doubt, had we discovered him near our hen-roost of a moonlight night.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Fox," said Mr. Goodman, motioning to him to be seated. "I sent for you to talk

about important business."

"At your service, sir," replied the other, with a twinkle in his gray eye which pleased Daisy's father; for it seemed to say, "I am ready for any kind of business."

"Very good," said Mr. Goodman; then, after tapping his fingers a moment on the table: "Now, Mr. Fox, I would like you to proceed at once to Albany. Can you go?"

Mr. Fox nodded.

"Very good. And when you are there, sir, I wish you to exert yourself to the utmost to prevent the passage of a bill known as 'The Bill for the protection of factory children.'"

Here Mr. Fox blew his nose, which action caused his cunning eyes to sparkle more brightly. Then, having returned the handkerchief to his pocket, "Mr. Goodman," he observed, "of course you are aware that it takes powder to shoot robins. Now, how much, sir, do you allow for this bird?"

Mr. Goodman smiled; then, after writing something on a slip of pa-

per, held it up before him.

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Fox. "That sum may do-it may. But you must know, sir, that this legislature is not like the last one. legislature"—here Mr. Fox himself smiled-"is affected with a rare complaint, which we gentlemen of the lobby facetiously call 'Ten-Commandment fever'; and the weaker a man is with this complaint, the more it takes to operate on him."

"Then make it this." And Mr. Goodman held up another slip with other figures marked on it.

"Well, yes, I guess that'll cure the worst case," said Mr. Fox, grin-

ning.

"Good!" exclaimed Daisy's father. "Then, sir, let us dismiss the subject and talk about something else-about a bill introduced by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, of which society I am president. It relates to chasing foxes."

"And this bill you don't want

killed?" said Mr. Fox.

"Precisely."

"Well, sir, how much are you willing to spend for that purpose?"

Again Mr. Goodman held up a

piece of paper.

"Why, my stars!" cried the lobby-member, after glancing at the figures-"my stars! isn't it as important a bill as the other?"

"I won't alter my figures," re-

plied Mr. Goodman.

"But remember, sir, you

president of the So-"

"I won't alter my figures," repeated Mr. Goodman, interrupting him.

"Then, sir, you cannot count on a law to prevent people running after foxes," answered Mr. Fox dryly; but presently, shrugging his shoulders, "However, as much as can be accomplished with that small sum of money, I will accomplish."

"I don't doubt it," observed Mr. Goodman; then, turning toward the table, "And now, sir, suppose we drink a glass of wine, after which you will proceed to Albany."

Accordingly, to Albany Mr. Fox went, while Richard Goodman and his daughter took wing for Long

But, strange to relate, the change

of air did not work the beneficial effects which her father had expected. There was evidently something the matter with Daisy. She had grown thoughtful beyond her years, and would ever and anon sit down on the beach, and, with Rover's head resting on her lap, gaze out over the blue waters without opening her lips for perhaps a whole hour.

"What can ail my darling child?"
Mr. Goodman often asked himself during these pensive moods. Then he consulted three physicians who happened to be taking a holiday at the Branch; one of whom recommended iron, another cod-liver oil, while the third doctor said: "Fresh milk, sir, fresh milk."

While he was thus worried about Daisy, the torrid, sunstroke heat of summer flamed down upon the city, and more and more people followed his example and fled to Newport and the White Mountains, to Saratoga and Long Branch. But those who went away were as a drop in the ocean to those who remained behind. The toilers are ever legion. We see them not, yet they are always near, toiling, toiling; and our refinement, our luxury, our happiness, are too often the fruit of their misery. The deeper the miner delves in the mine, the higher towers the castle of Mammon. So in these sultry dog-days Flywheel Bob's spider fingers were at work for Richard Goodman's benefit, as deftly as in the depths of winterno holiday for those poor fingers. Yet not even a sigh does Bob heave, and he cares less now for the blessed sunshine than he did in his baby days, when it painted a golden streak on the cellar floor. O foolish boy! why didst thou not go with thy mother? There was room enough in the pine box to have held ye both, and in Potter's field thy weary body would have found rest long ago.

But Bob, instead of dying, lived: and now behold him, in his eleventh year, in the heart of this big factory. the biggest in the metropolis, and the clatter and din of it are his very life. Oh! show him not a rose, Daisy dear. Keep far from his ears the song of the birds! Let him be, let him be where he is! And O wheels and cogwheels, and all ye other pieces of machinery! whatever name ye go by, keep on turning and rumbling and groaning; for Flywheel Bob believes with all his heart and soul that he is one with you, that ye are a portion of himself. Break not his mad illu-'Tis the only one he has ever enjoyed. And on the machinery went-on, on, on, all through June, July, August, earning never so much money before; and the millionaire to whom it belonged would have passed never so happy a summer (for his manager wrote him most cheering reports), if only Daisy had been well and cheerful.

It was the 1st of September when Mr. Goodman returned to New York—the 1st of September; a memorable day it was to be.

Hardly had he crossed the threshold of his city home when he received a message which caused him to go with all haste to the factory. What had happened? The machinery had broken down, come to a sudden dead pause; and the moment's stillness which followed was not unlike the stillness of the death-chamber-just after the vital spark has fled, and when the mourners can hear their own hearts beating. Then came a piercing, agonizing cry; up, up from floor to floor it shrilled. And lo! Flywheel Bob had become a raving maniac, and far out in the street his voice could be heard: "Don't let the machine stop! Don't let the machine stop! Oh! don't, oh! don't. Keep me going! keep me going!" Immediately the other operatives crowded about him; a few laughed, many looked awe-stricken, while one stalwart fellow tried to prevent his arms from swinging round like the wheel which had been in motion near him so long. But this was not easy to do, and the mad boy continued to scream: "Keep me going, keep me going, keep me going!" until finally he sank down from utter exhaustion. Then they carried him away to his underground home, the same dusky chamber where he was born, and left him.

But ere long the place was thronged with curious people, drawn thither by his cries, and who made sport of his crazy talk; for Bob told them that he was a flywheel, and it was dangerous to approach him. Then they lit some bits of candle, and formed a ring about him, so as to give his arms full space to swing. And now, while his wild, impish figure went spinning round and hissing amid the circle of flickering lights, it was well-nigh impossible to believe that he was the same being who eleven years before had crept and crowed and toddled about in this very spot, a happy babe, with Pin and a sunbeam to play with.

It was verging towards evening when Mr. Goodman received the message alluded to above; and Daisy, after wondering a little what could have called her father away at this hour, determined to sally forth and enjoy a stroll in the avenue with Rover. Her governess had a headache and could not accompany her; but this did not matter, for the child was ten years old and not afraid to go by herself.

Accordingly, out she went. But, to her surprise, when she reached the sidewalk her pet refused to follow. He stood quite still, and you might have fancied that he was revolving some project in his noddle. "Come, come!" said Daisy impatiently. But the dog stirred not an inch, nor even wagged his tail. And now happened something very interesting indeed. Rover presently did move, but not in the direction which his young mistress wished-up towards the Park-but down the avenue. Nor would he halt when she bade him, and only once did he glance back at her. "Well, well, I'll follow him," said Daisy. "He likes Madison Square; perhaps he is going there."

She was mistaken, however. Past the Square the poodle went, then down Broadway, and on, on, to Daisy's astonishment and grief, who kept imploring him to stop; and once she caught his ear and tried to hold him back, but he broke loose, then proceeded at a brisker pace than before, so that it was necessary almost to run in order to keep up with him. By and by the child really grew alarmed; for she found herself no longer in Broadway, but in a much narrower street. where every other house had a hillock of rubbish in front of it, and where the stoops and sidewalks were crowded with sickly looking children in miserable garments, and who made big eyes at her as she went by. The curs, too, yelped at Rover, as if he had no business to be among them; and one mangy beast tried to tear off his pretty blue ribbon. But, albeit no coward. Rover paused not to fight; steadily on he trotted, until at length he dived down a flight of rickety steps. Daisy had to follow, for she durst not leave him now; she seemed to

be miles away from her beautiful home on Murray Hill, and there was no choice left, save to trust to her pet to guide her back when he felt inclined.

But it was not easy to penetrate into the cavern-like domicile whither the stairway led; for it was very full of people. The dog, however, managed to squeeze through them; and Daisy, who was clinging to his shaggy coat, presently found herself in an open space lit up by half a dozen tapers, and in the middle of the ring a boy was yelling and swinging his arms around with terrific velocity, and the boy looked very like Flywheel Bob.

"Hi! ho! Here's a fairy, Boba fairy!" cried a voice, as Daisy emerged from the crowd and stood trembling before him. "It's Cinderella," shouted another. "Isn't she a beauty!" exclaimed a third

While they were passing these remarks upon the child, Rover was velping and frisking about as she had never seen him do before; he seemed perfectly wild with delight. But the one whom the poodle recognized and loved knew him not.

"O Bob! Bob!" cried Daisy presently, stretching forth her hands in an imploring manner, "don't kill my Rover! Don't, don't!"

There was indeed cause for alarm. The mad boy had suddenly ceased his frantic motions and clutched her pet by the throat, as if to choke him. Yet, although in dire peril of his life, Rover wagged his tail, and somebody shouted. "Bully dog! He'll die game!"

"Come away, come away quick!" said a man, jerking Daisy back by the arm. Then three or four other men flew to the rescue of the poodle, and not without some difficulty unbent Bob's fingers from their iron

grip; after which, still wagging his poor tail, Rover was driven out of the room after his mistress.

Oh! it seemed like heaven to Daisy when she found herself once more in the open air. But what she had heard and witnessed in the horrible place which she had just quitted wrought too powerfully on her nerves, and now the child burst into hysterical sobs. While Daisy wept, somebody-she hardly knew whether it was a man or womanfondled her and tried to soothe her, and at the same time slipped off her ring, earrings, and bracelets. The tender thief was in the very nick of time; for in less than five minutes, to Daisy's unutterable joy, who should appear but her father, accompanied by a policeman and the superintendent of the factory. "O my daughter! my daughter! how came you here?" cried Mr. Goodman, starting when he discovered her. "Have you lost your senses too?"

"Oh! no, no, pa," answered Daisy, springing into his arms. "Rover brought me here."

Then after a brief silence, during which her father kissed the tears off her cheek: "And, pa," she added, "I have seen Flywheel Bob, and do you know I think they have been doing something to him; for he acts so very strangely. Poor, poor Bob!"

While she was speaking the object of her commiseration was carried up the steps. Happily, he was tired out by his crazy capers and was now quite calm, nor uttered a word as they laid him on the sidewalk.

"Dear Bob, what is the matter? What have they done to you?" said Daisy, bending tenderly over him. Bob did not answer, but his eyes rolled about and gleamed brighter than her lost diamonds.

"Don't disturb him, darling. He is going to the hospital, where he will soon be well again," said Mr. Goodman.

"Well, pa, he sha'n't go back to that horrid factory," answered Daisy; "and, what's more, now that he is ill, he sha'n't go anywhere except to my house."

"Darling, don't be silly," said Mr. Goodman, dropping his voice. "How could a little lady like you wish to have him in your house?"

"Why, pa, Bob is ill; look at the toam on his lips. Yes, I'm sure he is ill, and I wish to nurse him."

"Well, my child, you cannot have him; therefore speak no more about it," replied Mr. Goodman, who felt not a little annoyed at the turn things were taking.

"Then, pa, I'll go to the hospital too, and nurse him there; upon my

word I will."

"No, you sha'n't."

"But I will. O father!" Here the child again burst into sobs, while the crowd looked on in wonder and admiration, and one man whispered: "What a game thing she is!"

Three days have gone by since Daisy's noble triumph, and now, on a soft, luxurious couch in an elegant apartment, lies Flywheel Bob, while by the bedside watches his devoted little nurse. The boy's reason has just returned, but he can hardly move or speak.

"O Bob! don't die," said Daisy, taking one of his cold, death-moistened hands in hers. You sha'n't work any more. Don't, don't die!" The physician has told her that death is approaching.

"Where am I?" inquired Bob in a faint, scarce audible whisper, and turning his hollow, bewildered

eyes on the child.

"You are here, Bob, in my home, and nobody shall put you out of it;

and when you get well, you shall have a long, long holiday."

The boy did not seem to understand; at least, his eyes went roving strangely round the room, and he murmured the word "Pin."

"What do you mean, dear Bob?" asked Daisy.

"Pin," he epeated—" my lost Pin."

Here the door of the chamber was pushed gently open and Rover thrust his head in. The dog had been thrice ordered out for whining and moaning, and Daisy was about to order him away a fourth time, when Bob looked in the direction of the door. Quick the poodle bounded forward, and as he bounded Flywheel Bob rose up in the bed, and cried in a voice which startled Daisy, it was so loud and thrilling: "O Pin! Pin! Pin!" In another moment his arms were twined round the creature's neck; then he bowed down his head.

Bob spoke not again—Bob never spoke again and when Daisy at length discovered that he was dead, she wept as if her heart would break.

"Father, I think poor Bob would not have died, if you had let me have him sooner," said Daisy the evening of the funeral.

"Alas! my child, I believe what you say is too true," replied Mr. Goodman. "But his death has already caused me suffering enough; do let me try and forget it. I promise there shall be no more Flywheel Bobs in my factory."

"Oh! yes, pa; give them plenty of holidays. Why, Rover, I think, is happier than many of those poor people." Then, patting the dog's head: "And, pa, I am going now to call Rover Pin; for I am sure that was his old name."

"Perhaps it was, darling," said Mr. Goodman, fondling with her ringlets. Then, with a smile, he added: "Daisy, do you know both Mr. Fox and my superintendent believe that I am gone mad!"

"Mad? Why, pa?"

"Because I have sworn to undo all I have done. Ay, I mean to fry my best to be elected president of another society—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; and I will try to make them all happy."

"Oh! yes, yes, as happy as Pin is," said Daisy, laughing. "Why, pa, I only work two hours a day, and Mam'selle is always pleased with

me." Then, her cherub face growing serious again: "And now," she added, "I must have a pretty tombstone placed on Bob's grave, and I will pay for it all myself out of my own money."

"Have you enough, darling?"

"Well, if I haven't, pa, you'll give me more money; for I wish to pay for it all, all myself."

"So you shall, my love," said Mr. Goodman, smiling. "But what kind of a monument is it to be?"

"A white marble cross, pa. Then I'll often go and hang wreaths upon it—wreaths of beautiful flowers; for I never, never, never will forget Flywheel Bob."

VILLAGE LIFE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

"I THINK I shall start for New Hampshire to-morrow," I said. "Do you know anything about L—, in Cheshire County?"

Jones, who had been meditatively examining the coloring of a richly-tinted meerschaum, sat up erect at this question, with a sudden access of vigor.

"L---?" he said. "By George! there's where Agnes Cortland lives

now in the summer."

It was the middle week of July. Aspirations for one whiff of the breeze among the hills had become irresistible. We were sitting together, Jones and I, in my room up-town after luncheon. Jones was a young New York artist in his first season after his return from Italy the previous autumn. He, too, was about to start on a sketching tour through Vermont, in which State his people lived. He was late leaving town, but money was not easy with him-a handsome young fellow of that golden age between twenty-three and twentyfour, when one is apt to think he needs only a very short-handled lever to move the world. He was of medium height, but squarely and powerfully built; with a face good-natured, but very resolute, in expression. A stranger would not be likely to take a liberty with him. I had a strong notion that Jones would make a better soldier than artist, if there were any question of blows being struck for the country, which happily there is not. hitherto I had shrewdly kept that opinion to myself. Considerably older than he was, and engaged in another occupation, circumstances had thrown us a good deal together. Intimacy had brought confidence, and confidence, at his age, meantnothing more nor less than it always does under such circumstances-the unbosoming of his love How few there are who affairs. have not found themselves in the same position, either as actors or sympathetic chorus, or in time as both! What countless dramas of passion are continually being put upon the private stage before this limited audience!

Now, it is not the purpose of this paper to pursue the history of Jones' captivity at the hands of the tender goddess through all the infinitesimal and transcendental chapters a first romance runs into. More placid emotions and observations, befitting the serenity of approaching middle age, are in store for the reader. And in fact the history of Jones' passion is still incomplete. But so much of it may be given as fell within the purview of our New Hampshire observations.

Jones was poor—prosaic fact, which robs life of so many compensations as we grow old. But at twenty-three we spurn the mastery of the glittering dross—that is, if Congress gives us any to spurn! Let us say rather of the flimsy paper. At that age of our flowing life we coin money at our own mint; or, more truly, draw limitless drafts on the Bank of the Future. Happy the man who

meets them when they fall due! Jones, at least, had no doubts as to his future solvency. But his plans were vague-very!

Agnes Cortland was the daughter of a railroad director-or two or three directors rolled into oneand had the world, or at least the New York world, to choose from. Poor Jones! his story might almost be predicted from the start. Yet this inheritor of the (latent) genius of any half-dozen masters, ancient or modern, you choose to name, believed, perhaps with some reason, that this daughter of Dives liked him; and as for himself, he vowed with hyperbole that he adored her. They had frequently met-their families then being neighbors in the country-before he went to Italy, where he had spent two years studying and wandering about. No avowal of affection had been made between them, but he had gone away with the consciousness many little signs and tokens give that he was not disliked. his return a year ago some meetings had taken place-at rarer intervals-in society. At an evening party some months before she had given him, he said, a slight but unmistakable opportunity of declaring himself, if he had wished to do so.

"But I did not take it," said Jones, who, spite of his being in love, was as manly a young fellow as one could meet. "She knows I am poor; and I don't want to be thought a fortune-hunter."

I laughed at this quixotic declaration.

"My dear fellow," I said, "you fly at high game. But I should not let the auri sacra fames interfere, one way or the other, with my tender emotions. If I did so at all, Plutus would have his due weight in the scale, believe me!"

"What would you do?" said Jones. This was in one of those "tobacco parliaments" in early spring-if so they might be called, where one, only, smoked, and the other looked on with sympathy; for I had abandoned the "weed" some years before-hardly of such profundity, nor yet so silent, as those Mr. Carlyle speaks of. Jones had recurred to his usual topic of hopes

and perplexities.

"Do?" I answered, looking at him retrospectively, as it were, as if contemplating my own departed youth, as he sat there in his favorite attitude after dinner, gracefully balancing one leg over the arm of my chintz-covered easy-chair, while I was stretched out on the sofa. "Ah! that is an easy question to propound, but not so easy to answer. At your age I should not think you would need much prompting. But if you ask me, I would say, leave it alone! Love is a luxury for the rich or the evenlymated poor. But you are not likely to take that advice. deal would depend on the reinforcements she might bring to the struggle. A woman is not always a passive instrument in those affairs, but sometimes has a will of her own. I have never seen your fair one, and know nothing about her. But if she be a girl of some strength of character, and her love do not prove a mere school-girl's fancy, she might possibly gain her father's consent. But it is not a promising adventure, at the best; and I would not recommend you to embark your hopes in it. Keep clear of serious entanglements until you see your way before you. Above all, avoid anything like a clandestine engagement. It will not add to your happiness or hers. I don't suppose you will think this

a very encouraging opinion. But there may be circumstances in your favor I know nothing of. Marry her, if you can, and can get the father's consent; and go into "railroading" with him in his office. You will make more money at that than you are ever likely to do sticking little dabs of color on a piece of canvas."

I saw Jones wince at this mercenary view of his art. But he bore it like a man, and continued silent. The suggestion of such a change of vocation did not appear to surprise him, though it was plain no active intention of throwing up his art had yet entered his mind. The fact is, Jones is one of those young men-not inconsiderable in numbers in the profession-who "have a studio," but are not likely ever to send many master-pieces out of it. Developing some precocious talent for drawing when they are boys, and seizing with boyish eagerness upon the suggestion of being "an artist," they are offered by fond but undiscerning parents upon the altar of art. But they never advance beyond a mechanical dexterity in putting conventional scenes upon canvas. haven't a spark of that genius that is often observed where other pursuits have prevented a devotion to the profession. Eventually they abandon altogether the study or practice of their art, or sink into drudges for the picture or chromo dealers, or grind out a living as drawing-masters, or-Heaven knows how. I will not say that Jones was altogether deficient in talent, but the talent that makes an agreeable accomplishment for the rich amateur is a different thing from that which will pay the piper or win eminence in the art. Jones painted his pictures for the autumn and spring exhibitions, and had one or two on view in one of the up-town windows. But at Du Vernet's big sale I know that a clever little bit of coloring on which he had spent some time was knocked down to a chromo-dealer for sixteen dollars! How was he going to live on such prices? And as for marrying Agnes Cortland—it was simply preposterous to think of it. Nor is this redundancy of young native artists on whom neither genius nor fashion smiles confined to New York alone. In Boston, which is the only other city boasting of a native school of art, the same low prices prevail. It is disheartening; but a more disheartening thing still is that those prices often represented the actual value of the picture.

Jones was imperfectly educated, though his continental travel had made him a fair linguist. He certainly drew very little inspiration from the antique, for he knew next to nothing about it; nor had he much of that sympathy with the undercurrent of life, and its relations with nature, which gives significance to common things. He had a fondness for pleasure which, of course, did not contribute to his success. Yet he was one of those young fellows whom it is impossible to meet without liking. was frank, honorable, and spirited. and had a robust shrewdness about him in dealing with men and things that made him a pleasant compan-That he would eventually choose a more active kind of life -and probably succeed in it-I was half-convinced, and my advice about "railroading," though spoken partly in jest, was inwardly meant in good faith.

On this particular July evening on which our paper opens Jones followed up the announcement of my proposed trip to L—— by expressing a wish that he were going there too, so that he might come to a definite understanding with Agnes Cortland; and the wish was soon followed by the determination to act on it.

"How long do you intend to stay there?" he asked.

"Till the first week in September," I said.

"Then I will come back that way, and join you for a few days about the first of September. The Cortlands don't leave there till October. We can come back to New York together."

It would have been ungracious on my part to have objected to this proposal, though I had a good many doubts about its wisdom. So it happened that my little excursion to L—, which I had innocently designed to be a season of simple lotus-eating such as Mr. Tennyson ascribes to his Olympian deities, "reclined upon the hills together, careless of mankind," was complicated by a subordinate interest in a comedy from real life which had that quiet village for a stage.

The next day I started, taking Boston en route. That staid, quiet, cleanly city seems always to be, compared with New York, like a good school-boy by the side of a big, blustering brother fonder of a street row than his books. to Fitchburg, where I stopped over night, as some stage travelling was to be done from our "jumping-off" place, and riding over the country roads in the morning was more promising than on a dark and cloudy night. In the morning the Fitchburg Railroad again, and one of its branches to L--. The unwonted coolness of the morning breeze, as the train entered the New Hampshire hills, already be-

gan to refresh mind and body alike. The pines and hemlocks extending back into deep, dim recesses carpeted with moss and ferns: the cattle moving slowly over the pastures in the distance: the pastures themselves stretching up the sides of the highest hills, still of the freshest green, without a hint of the vellow undertone that I watched gradually overspread them as the summer ripened into autumn; a lake in the foreground, silent, unvisited, its clear waters unpolluted by the dregs of commerce or the drainage of a vast metropolis; even the caw! caw! of the ravens flying off from the tops of the pine stumps, send a novel and delicious feeling of freedom through the breast of the city traveller who has put care and work behind him for a season. Nor is this feeling altogether evanescent. Even now, as winter approaches and the north winds from the same hills come sweeping down over the great city, sending us chattering and freezing to our cosev firesides, the glory of the July foliage moves our memory like a far-off dream of youth. Yet, after all, it may bedoubted whether the charm of country scenes is not due in great: part to their novelty and the feeling that we are not bound to them longer than we please. Of all that has; been written in praise of country life, how much is the work of thecity resident; how little, comparatively speaking, springs from thecountry itself! There drudgery too often takes the place of sentiment. It is the Epicurean poet, Horace, satiated with the noise of the Forum and the gossip of thebaths, who sings sweetest of rural contentment, of the "lowing herds," the "mellow fruits of autumn," and the "brooks murmuring over stony beds." But when he gives play to

his satiric vein, none pictures more truthfully than the Venusian the grumbling of the husbandman, who "turns the heavy clay with the hard plough." Embowered some shady arbor on the windings of the Digentia through his Sabine farm, or doing a little amateur farming, to the amusement, as he confesses, of his blunt country neighbors, who laughed at the dandy poet with a hoe in his hand, it was easy for Horace to chant the smooth and sunny side of country life. But the eight laborers on his estate, chained literally to the soil, as many a New England farmer morally is by the burden of debt or family, no doubt saw things dif-And the bailiff of his ferently. woodlands we know to have despised those "desert and inhospitable wilds," and to have longed for the streets and shows of Rome. is amazing upon what inattentive ears the music of our wild birds falls in a secluded farm-house. Often it seems absolutely unheard; while the clatter of the long street of the country town that the farmer visits once a month is for ever in his mind.

But we delay too long at the way station at L——. Let us onwards.

The carrier of the United States mail, who is at the same time the Tehu of the passenger stage, slings our impedimenta up behind with an energy to be envied by a veteran "baggage-smasher" at some of our big depots, straps it down, and jumps upon the box. We mount more slowly beside him, disdaining to be shut up in the close interior, and intent upon looking at the country we pass through this lovely The two stout grays morning. breast the hill leading to L-Centre, eight miles distant.

The surface of the country is

hilly and broken: as we approach L---, mountainous. Mounting the crest of the first steep hill, a beautiful natural panorama spreads out before us: long, narrow, intersecting lines of timber, like giant hedges, dividing the hill farms from each other. A rolling country spreads toward the east, bounded on the horizon by a low range of mountains wooded to the summit, and with a white steeple flashing out here and there among the trees at their base. The effects of light and shade, caused by the clouds on a brilliant day, on one of those white steeples, standing out solitarily against the side of a mountain eight or ten miles distant, are peculiar. Sometimes it becomes invisible, as the circle of the shadow is projected upon that area of the mountain which includes it. Then, as the dark veil moves slowly, with a sliding motion, up the side and over the crest of the mountain, the white spire flashes out from the obscure background of the forest with a sudden brilliancy. On this side patches of blue water among the trees in the hollows revealed the presence of numerous ponds, as the small lakes, and some of the large ones, are universally called in New England.

To the northwest what seemed to be a level plain from the height over which we rode, but which was in reality broken and undulating ground, stretched beneath us for ten or twelve miles to the base of Mt. Monadnock. The mountain, grand, massive, and still veiled by a thin mist, rose boldly from the low country at its foot to a height of nearly four thousand feet.

A ride of an hour and a half brought us to the top of the hill on the side of which stands L——. A dozen scattered houses flank the broad village green, and a Congregational meeting-house, with white belfry tower and green blinds, stands half-way down the incline.

The post-office and country store combined is at the cross-roads as you drive down the hill, and some ancient elms on the green seem to nod at the stranger with a friendly air as he enters the village. "Here," said I to myself, "is rural quiet and simplicity. Farewell for many slumberous weeks the busy haunts of men." L- is quite out of the beaten track of summer travel, and had been recommended me by a friend who had spent some seasons there, on the ground of economy, charming scenery, good fishing, and repose. Nor did I find any reason to regret having listened to him. A country tavern offers entertainment to man and beast, and is resorted to by the drummers and sample men who invade Las elsewhere, with their goods. But I was not forced to be dependent on it, as a letter from my friend opened to me the hospitable doors of the comfortable farm-house where he had boarded two years before.

Here let it be said at the outset that whatever the other drawbacks of village life in New Hampshire, there is among the farming class a natural courtesy, and, among the women, even an inherited refinement of manner, especially in their treatment of strangers, which speaks well for the native stock. Prejudices there are among both men and women-deep-rooted, as we shall see-and narrow-minded opinions in plenty; but even these are concealed where to manifest them might give offence. The family in which I was domiciled consisted of Mr. Allen and his wife, their married daughter-who, together with her

husband, resided with them—an unmarried daughter, and a pretty little girl, the grandchild. Mr. Allen kept a country store-for Lboasted of two-and traded also in cattle with Canada, making a journey sometimes as far as Montreal in the spring to buy stock, which he fattened on his pastures through the summer and autumn, and sold in the early part of the winter. These various ventures, which were on the whole successful—as the command of a little ready money enabled him to take his time and buy and sell to advantage-had made him more "forehanded" than most of his neighbors. He was one of the selectmen of L--. His dwelling-house, a large, white, wellkept two-story edifice, with a garden-plot facing the village street, a piazza on the sunny side, and two beautiful maples dividing the carriage yard from the road, was one of the handsomest in L-. Mrs. Allen was one of those energetic housewives whose sound sense and domestic capacity had evidently contributed not a little to her husband's present prosperity.

They were a sturdy couple, intelligent, honest, and knowing what was due to themselves and others; now going down the hill together with mutual dependence and confidence in each other. I consider them a good example of the best type of the New Hampshire farming class.

The married daughter did not compare favorably with the mother. One could not say of her in any sense:

"O matre pulchra filia pulchrior!"

for, as to the question of female beauty, I will not say, as far as my observations extend, that the New Hampshire, or indeed the New England women generally, outside the radius of Boston and some of the large towns, are very generously endowed by nature with that gracious but dangerous gift. The lines of the face are too strongly marked; they are sallow, the form angular; or, where the figure is fuller, it is apt to be as redundant as the old Flemish painters make the women at a village fair.

But this absence of feminine beauty is not universal. I have seen a young mother with her babe in her lap—a visitor sitting in Mrs. Allen's parlor-whomadea picture of beautiful maternity as dignified and simple as Murillo ever painted. As for that more lasting moral beauty which, where it is feminine, puts on its most delightful and engaging charm, Mrs. Harley, the married daughter, was too much engaged with her own little cares and gossip-poor woman !- to think much of so intangible a possession. Brought up, probably, in habits of more leisure and pleasure-seeking than her mother, who still took all the household work upon herself, she was a victim of ennui and of that blight of too many American homes—only one child to care for. Her health was delicate and uncertain, and she bade fair to sink eventually into that class of invalid wives which forms such an unhappily large percentage of American women. How often have I heard her complain of the dreadful dulness of the day! "But." I asked, "what will you do in the winter, if you find the summer so unbearable?" Her answer that they generally enjoyed themselves enough in the summer-time to be able to get through the winter. I don't know whether this was a covert thrust at my lack of entertaining power; but I laughed

at the stroke of satire at my expense, innocent or intended. That long dreary, snow-shrouded New Hampshire winter-it demanded indeed a stout heart to face it in one of those isolated villages. Mrs. Harley had given up her music when she married; the piano stood idle in the best room. She read nothing-unless looking at the fashion-plates in a ladies' magazine be considered reading. A Sunday-school picnic, a day's shopping in the nearest country town, were white days in her calendar. Is such a picture of life cheerless? Yet too many women are forced to endure it elsewhere. Happy they if the abounding resources of the faith and its literature come to their aid! Mrs. Harley was a kind woman withal. if her attention were drawn for a moment from herself; and an affectionate and anxious wife. This and her love for her child-fretful and over-indulgent as the latter sentiment was apt to be-were her redeeming qualities. Placed in a large city, with means equal in proportion to those within her reach in L-, she would have made a more agreeable woman, and would have been tenfold happier herself. The influence of semisolitary life--where a religious vocation does not exalt and sanctify it—is more unfavorable in its effects upon women than upon men. latter commonly have work to do which keeps their faculties from rusting. Woman's nature is essentially social.

Mr. Harley assisted his fatherin-law in the store—a tall, handsome young man with a city air, who, at that season, sat in the store the whole afternoon with perhaps one customer. Such a life for youth, with its superabundant energies ready to pour like a torrent

into any channel, is stagnation. The highest of man's natural powers rust and decay. But natural forces have their sway in the great majority of such cases, and force an outlet for themselves. youth of these villages leave their homes for the great cities, or take Horace Greeley's advice and "go West." Life is hard, and it is monotonous, which adds a new slavery to hardship. The exodus is constant. L- has less population and fewer inhabited houses now than it had forty years ago. The same is true of other villages—a striking fact in a comparatively new country. One rambles along some by-road overgrown with grass. and presently comes upon a deserted and ruined house and barn, the rafters only standing, or perhaps nothing more than a heap of bricks in the cellar. He asks about the people, and is told that they have "gone away." The answer is vague and uncertain as their fate. spoke to an old man of eightyseven, seated in the shade on the long bench before the country store, where he could hear the news in the morning. He remembered with distinctness the events of the war of 1812. He spoke with regret of the flourishing times of his youth in L- and its dulness today. This roving disposition of the American youth is the result of immense elbow-room, and has been providential in building up new States and subduing the virgin wilderness. The manufacturing cities of New Hampshire also gain vearly at the expense of the small villages. The township-or town, as it is most commonly called-embraces three or four of such villages, and is subject to the same reciprocal movement. Comparatively few new farms have been broken

in during the last twenty or thirty years; and too rarely it happens on the old farms that fresh ground is taken in from the pasture for cultivation. The son tills what his father or grandfather cleared.

The first few days in L- I spent rambling about the pastures some of them literally red with the raspberry, which, though it has not the delicacy or fragrance of the wild strawberry, is not to be disdained by the city palate-or climbing to the tops of the highest neighboring hills. What a sense of elastic joy and freedom to me, who had not spent a summer in the country for three years, to lie stretched at full length on the top of a new-mown hill, and let the eye wander over the valley beneath, with its intervening woods and ponds, till it rested upon the distant mountains, the cloud-shadows chasing each other over their sides and summits! If this were not in truth an Arcadia to those who lived and died there, and were buried in the white-stoned churchvard among the elms-if to them life brought its cares, its jealousies, and sorrows-to the stranger who sought nothing more than to enjoy its natural beauties it renewed all the associations of rural happiness and simplicity. Not that one might hope to see a Corydon and Phillis issue from the New Hampshire woods-for there is a sternness among those northern scenes, even in the brightest bloom of summer, foreign to the poetry of the Southbut that in its dark pine groves and on its windy hills fancy might picture an eclogue or a romance not less sweet and tender because more real.

L— is on the height of land between the valleys of the Connecticut and Merrimac, between twenty

and thirty miles distant from each. It is from one thousand to one thousand three hundred feet above the sea level. It is said of the rain that falls on the roof of the village church that part of it eventually runs into the Connecticut, part into the Merrimac, so evenly does its roof-tree divide the water-shed of those rivers. But as the same story is told of other churches in the central belt of Cheshire County, it may be regarded rather in the light of a rhetorical illustration than as a fact of physical geography. The scenery is not of the grand or sublime order to be seen further north among the White Mountains. except where Monadnock raises its dark and solemn front above the surrounding landscape; but it is beautiful and picturesque. Its greatest charm is its variety. In the morning, when the sun was well towards the zenith-for the fresh air of those hills made the day at all hours delightful-I would stroll out over the pastures to a hill a quarter of a mile distant from the farm-house. There would I seat myself, protected from the sun's ardent rays, under a young maple bush, the elastic branches of which, with the sloping ground thick with ferns, made a natural easy-chair. The valley is below me, the farms stretch along the nearer hills, and in the further distance the blueveiled mountains define the skyline. I bend down a branch of the maple, and before me is the upper half of Mt. Monadnock, a thin gray mist still enveloping it. The base of the mountain is hidden by an intervening hill. Leaving this pasture, and walking a few hundred rods further on, I enter a field where the hay has just been cut, and which is now as smooth as a cro-

quet lawn, but not so level: for it is the crest of one of the highest hills. Here a new scene awaits me. To the north and west the hill has the shape almost of a perfect dome. Stretched on the top, I cannot see the declivities of the sides, but only the tops of the trees at some distance. One has the sensation of being on the roof of a high building with a deep drop between him and the surrounding country. The view is superb. The whole mass of Mt. Monadnock, from its base to the highest elevation. rises from the valley ten miles dis-At its foot is the village of West Jaffrey, a fashionable watering place. The white spire of the church is conspicuous among the trees. Further south is Gap Mountain and Attleborough Mountain; and sweeping round to the east, the view stretches along the New Ipswich Mountains to Watatick The circuit extends about twenty or thirty miles, making a picture of great natural beauty. The English hay, as the timothy and red clover are generally called, was still standing in many of the fields, but here and there the whirr of the mowing-machine could be heard, and the eye, following the direction of the sound, could discern the mower in his shirt-sleeves driving his pair of horses in the distant field. The meadow-grass of the lowlands was still in most places untouched. On the sides of the hills the scattered fields of wheat, barley, and oats, still green, made darker patches of verdure on the yellowish ground-color.

But the view I most preferred was from a hill a little to the south of the village near some deserted buildings. Here the scene was wilder and more extensive. To the west Mt. Monadnock could be

seen through a gorge between two hills; to the east was a wild and broken country: while to the south the woods seemed to extend as far as the eve could reach, and over the furthest range of hills the great dome of Mt. Wachusett in Massachusetts, nearly thirty miles distant, was plainly seen, gray and massive, with the naked eye. It was only when one turned to Mt. Monadnock, ten miles distant, and observed how plainly he could distinguish the different colors of the mountain -the dark woods, the brown, bare and the slate-colored surfaces. rocks-that, looking at Mt. Wachusett, and noting its uniform pale gray outline, he was able to estimate the real distance of the latter, 30 comparatively close at hand did it appear.

Seated at ease on the smooth turf on the summit of this "heavenkissing" hill, and looking at this wide and beautiful prospect, one might repeat to himself Mr. Longfellow's lines:

"Pleasant it was, when woods were green
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long, drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go;"

substituting only for "drooping boughs" the irregular ranges of hills.

But descriptions of natural scenery, if long continued, are wearisome. Even a Ruskin is read best in snatches. The mind otherwise becomes clogged with images. Let us return, therefore, to animated life.

As Sunday approached, I made inquiries about the nearest Catholic church. I found it was at W—, eight or nine miles distant. I had no means of getting there the first Sunday. I retired to my room and read some chapters of that sublime and affecting work,

the *Imitation of Christ*, the gift of a good and beloved mother.

A Catholic is still almost a being from another moral world in some of the isolated New Hampshire villages. Nowhere are the traditions of Puritanism more zealously or rigidly maintained. These good folk seem hardly yet to have emerged from a fog of wild amazement that "popish" priests and their followers should be tolerated by the selectmen. Not that any overt or offensive change of manner follows the announcement that one is a Catholic-as I have elsewhere said. there is a natural or inherited vein of good manners among the people that forbids it-but a momentary silence reveals to the speaker that he has stated something strange and unlooked for. There is an unmistakable tone of intolerance manifest, however, in any allusion to the poorer class of Irish and French that congregate in the larger towns, and are sometimes found in the villages in a wooden-ware factory, or cutting wood or hemlock-bark, or doing an odd job of haymaking. They are looked upon with dislike and distrust, mixed with a feeling of contempt. Curious it is that the native-born New Englander, with his mind saturated with hereditary theories of personal liberty, equality, and fraternity, should yet evince a more unconquerable aversion to the foreign element, which has contributed so largely to the greatness of the country, than is shown in European countries to men of a different race, unless war has temporarily embittered national feeling. Yet the explanation is not hard to find. This descendant of the Puritan, chained to the rocky and ungrateful soil his forefathers won from the Indians and the wilderness, sees with sullen

indignation and jealousy the same rights and privileges which he enjoys under our free institutions extended so largely to those of a different nationality and religion. In revenge he draws himself more jealously into his shell. Nor is this feeling confined to the rich and refined; it penetrates the mass of the native-born New England population.

To speak of lighter things. Society in L—— is eminently aristocratic. Better, perhaps, it would be to say that the lines of society are very strongly marked, and that the aristocratic element is essentially conservative.

Mrs. Cortland, the wife of the New York capitalist, who resides there three months in the summer, a stout, refined, tight-gloved, graciously condescending lady, gives a metropolitan tone to L--- society. Mr. Cortland, an easy-going, easytempered man in private life, but reported to be hard as flint in business matters, seldom finds time to leave New York, and his visits to L- are uncertain. His country house, a large, handsome mansion with well-kept grounds, croquetlawn, coach-house, and stables, is on the highest ground in the village: and Mrs. Cortland occupies without dispute the highest ground socially. It is an imperial elevation, after the manner of the saying attributed to Cæsar. A call on Mrs. Cortland is the event of a week, and a return call from her is a matter not to be lightly treated. How have I seen this good Mrs. Allen, my landlady, prepare her best room for the grand occasion, and Mrs. Harley speculate about it with well-assumed indifference a whole afternoon. One or two other magnates from Boston, scattered through L- and adjacent townships, save Mrs. Cortland from complete exhaustion by contact with the village people during the summer.

Then there is the local aristoracy, consisting of the wife of the Congregational pastor ex-officio, and Mrs. Parsons, the wife of "Squire" Parsons, who owns a small bucketfactory near L---. These two ladies maintain a strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with Mrs. Cortland during the summer. Then come the middle classes, comprising Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Harley, the young doctor's wife-a stranger and somewhat snubbed by the autochthonous élite-and the wellto-do farmers' wives. Finally, we have the profanum vulgus, the tail of L- society, or, to speak more correctly, those whom society does not recognize-some farmers' wives whose husbands were too much in debt to allow them to keep up appearances; one or two hapless women who sold milk in a wagon to the neighboring towns, and drove the wagon themselves; and the village washerwoman, who went around doing "chores." I think I have exhausted the classification of the social strata of L-. I observed that the men eschewed as much as possible the aristocratic distinctions made by their wives, and were apt to resent by silence or the assumption of an unwonted bluntness the empty airs and loud voice with which some vulgar rich man from a neighboring large town would sometimes stride through the village.

Wanderers and waifs, destined apparently to be at some time drawn into the great caldron of city life—perhaps to their own destruction—were not wanting in L—. I have said that the women were not remarkable for beauty. But there

was one exception. A girl belonging to one of the most destitute families in the village, by one of those whims of nature which are not uncommon, was gifted with a face and figure to attract even an unobservant eye, and which seemed out of place in that quiet and homely neighborhood. The mother, a poor, struggling woman with a growing-up family of all ages, managed to live somehow by the days' work and occasional assistance given her by the well-to-do The father was living. families. but spent most of his time in the county jail for drunkenness. daughter of whom I speak was about nineteen or twenty years of age; tall, of fair complexion, with a naturally elegant carriage and a proud and almost defiant air, as if she resented the caprice of fortune which had placed her in that lowly station. She had the art of dressing well with limited means, which some women possess to the envy of others. On Sundays and at picnics she outshone the more expensively-dressed daughters of the farmers. She had been, and perhaps still is, the maid at the village inn. It may be imagined that gossip was not idle about this poor girl, thus singularly placed and dangerously gifted. Dreadful quarrels had taken place between the father and mother about the girl's staying at the hotel: the drunken father, with a true sense of what was becoming, insisting that she should leave, the mother as strenuously maintaining that she should remain. The beauty of the girl herself was not of that domestic type I have elsewhere noticed in the mother and her babe I saw in Mrs. Allen's parlor, but of that showy, restless, naturally haughty stamp which presaged storm, perhaps disaster. It is this class misfortune follows and the great cities sweep into their net. Poverty often makes vice of that which, under happier fortunes, might have been attractive virtue. Absit omen. May this rustic beauty find a happier, if more homely, destiny as the wife of some honest farmer in L——!

The summer passed, week after week. I fished, I walked, I rode, I read, I loitered. The barley ripened on the hill behind the farm-house, and a golden tint began to spread over the distant fields. The apples grew large and ruddy on one side where the sun struck the laden branch in the orchard. The tassels of the corn showed purple. August blazed. The doves flew thirstily to the large blue pump, and perched on the edges of the horse-trough after the farmer watered his horse at mid-day. The bees hummed three at a time in the big yellow cups of the squash-vines. you ever observed of that homely vegetable how ingeniously and dexterously it fastens its daring and aggressive vines to the ground as it shoots out over the close-cut grass? Stoop down among the after-math. or rowen, as it is called in New Hampshire, and you will see that at the inosculation of each successive joint of the vine, where it throws out its tendrils and blossoms, it also thrusts forth slender, white, curling ligaments that twist, each of them, tightly around a tiny tuft of the short grass. Thus it moors itself, as if by so many delicate living cables, to the bosom of the life-giving earth.

I might, if space allowed, tell of my fishing ventures, and how one glorious morning we rode out of L—— in a big yellow wagon with three horses—a party of seven of us, ladies and gentlemen, from

the village-to make the ascent of Mt. Monadnock. This is the lion of all the country round. Parties are made up every week to climb its rugged summit. Over the hills and rolling ground we gaily rattled. Through the sandy country roads, where the branches of the trees met overhead and made dim aisles of verdure, we smoothly sped. then what panting, laughing, climbing, shrill screaming, as we toiled up the winding path from the halfway house to the top of the mountain! What a magnificent, boundless view repaid us! The day was To the north, Mt. Kearclear. sarge and rolling ranges of mountains; to the southeast, a diversified surface of country spreading onwards far as the eye could reach towards the unseen ocean: to the south, Mt. Wachusett; below us woods, valleys, and lakes. A feeling of awe creeps over one in these mountain solitudes.

As to the fishing, I will confess that to me, who had thrown a fly over more than one Canadian river, and had killed my twenty-pound salmon on the Nipisiquit, loafing with a pole in a boat over a lily-covered pond for a half-pound pickerel was not tremendously exciting sport. But what mattered it? The mornings were soft and wooing; the woods were full of mysterious shadows; the water was limpid as if Diana and her nymphs bathed there in the spectral moonlight. Life passed smoothly and agreeably. I sought no more.

The blackberries began to ripen, first one by one and then in sable clusters, in the pastures. The days were growing shorter. The twilight sank more quickly into night. September approached, and I began to look for the appearance of my friend Jones. I had seen Miss

Cortland two or three times coming from or going to the meeting-house on Sunday mornings, when all the beauty and fashion of L—— for miles around rode up in buggies, carryalls, or open wagons; but I had never met her to be introduced to her—a little imperial beauty, with a fresh and rosy color, and a mouth shaped like Cupid's bow, that needed only to smile to conquer.

On a bright September morning, when the surrounding atmosphere was clear as a bell, but a thin haze still clung about Mt. Monadnock and the far-off mountains, Jones rode over on the stage-coach from the railroad station and joined me at L——. He asked eagerly about Miss Cortland.

Was she in the village?

Yes.

Had I met her?

No; but I had seen her two or three times.

What did I think of her?

Well, I thought her pretty enough to excuse a little wildness of imagination on his part. He would be a lucky fellow if he got her and some of her father's money or a position in his business!

Did I think he would give up

his Art so easily?

"My dear Jones," I replied, "I don't want to appear cold-blooded, or to dash your enthusiasm for your art in the least; but, to speak candidly, I should not be surprised if you did some day under sufficient temptation—the prospect of marrying Miss Cortland, for example."

Jones declared his intention of calling on Miss Cortland that very day. He had a sketch-book full of studies, spirited, but many of them mere hints. He came back before dinner, full of life, and pro-

posing a score of schemes for tomorrow. He made a sort of small whirlwind in my quiet life. Mrs. Cortland had received him civilly. but he thought a little coolly. But he had seen Agnes, and had spoken a few words to her that might mean much or little as they were taken, and he was happy-rather boisterously happy, perhaps, as a young fellow will be at such times-full of jokes, and refusing to see a cloud on his horizon.

Jones fell easily into our farmhouse ways, though he was apt to steal off in the mornings to play croquet on the Cortlands' lawn with Miss Cortland and Miss Parsons, and any other friend they could get to join them

One afternoon, when the sun was getting low and a southerly wind blowing, we started to try for some fish at a pond about half an hour's walk from the house. As we turned off the highway into a by-road covered with grass that led to the pond, I saw Miss Cortland standing on the rising ground some distance before us. She was looking from us towards the sinking sun, now veiled in quick-drifting clouds. Her dog, a large, powerful animal, a cross between a Newfoundland and Mount St. Bernard, was crouched at her feet. Some vague thoughts about Una and her lion flitted through my mind. But I was more struck by the way the light touched her figure, standing out motionless against the gray sky. It reminded me very much of the general effect of a painting by a foreign artist-Kammerer, I think it was-that I saw at the exhibition of the Boston Art Club last year. It was the picture of a girl standing on a pier on the French coast, looking out to sea. golden hair was slightly stirred by

the breeze, her lips a little parted, and there was a far-away look in her eyes, as if she may have expected a lover to be coming over the sea in one of the yachts that lined the horizon. The dress of the girl and the stone-work of the pier were both white. It was a good example of the striking effects produced by the free use of a great deal of almost staring white, which is a favorite device of the latest school of French art.

As we advanced, the dog growled and rose, but, recognizing Jones, wagged his tail inoffensively as we drew nearer. Miss Cortland turned towards us.

"Shall I introduce you?" said

"No," I said. "I'll go on to the pond. I'll see you to-night."

Jones advanced, hat in hand. "What happy fortune," he said, addressing her, "has led me to meet the goddess of these woods?" Then, altering his tone, he added in a bantering way: "I see you have been poaching on our preserves, Miss Cortland. But I do wonder at your taste, fishing for eels!" pointing to a small basket on her arm from which hung some of the long stems of the pond-lily. This he said to vex her, knowing her horror of those creatures. "Eels?" she exclaimed indignantly, with a tone and gesture of aversion at the thought. "They are pond-lilies."

"Oh! that is very well to say," replied Jones, "when you have the lid of the basket down to hide them; but I insist upon their being eels unless you show them to me."

By this time I was out of hearing. I left them together, and kept on down the road to the pond.

That night Jones came into my

room with a quieter manner than He was evidently very usual. happy, but his happiness had a sobering effect upon him. He told me that he had made a plain avowal of his feelings to Agnes Cortland as they walked home together, and that he had won from her the confession that she loved him and had not been indifferent to him before he left for Europe. I wished him joy of his good-fortune, though I could foresee plainly enough that his difficulties had only begun. little time these two innocent young souls-for Jones I knew to be singularly unsullied by the world for a man of his age-would enjoy their paradise undisturbed together. Then would come maternal explanations, and the father's authority would be invoked. A solemn promise would be exacted from her to see him no more. Miss Cortland was much attached to her parents, who would be sincerely anxious for her welfare. She would not make much resistance. Some day there would come a storm of tears, and poor Jones's letters and the ring he gave her would be returned to him by a faithful messenger, and a little note, blotted with tears, asking him to forgive her and praying for his happiness. This must be the end. A year or two of separation and a summer and winter in Europe with her parents would leave nothing more than a little sad memory of her brief New Hampshire romance; and in five years she would be married to some foreigner of distinction or successful man of business, and would be a happy wife and mother. As for poor Jones, he would probably be heard of at rare intervals for a year or two as a trader on the Pacific

coast or prospecting a claim in Nevada. But men like him, vigorous, powerful, well equipped in body and temper for the struggle with the world, are not kept down long by such disappointments. The storm is fierce, and leaves its scars after it; but the man rises above it, and is more closely knit thereafter. Jones will make his mark in the world of business, if not of art.

No unwelcome prophecies of mine, however, disturbed his happiness for those few days. I let events take their course. Why should I interrupt his dream by Cassandra-like anticipations of woe, which would have been resented as a reflection upon the constancy of his idol? I know that they met frequently for the following three or four days. Then came the packing up for departure. My long holiday was over.

On a foggy morning in Septem ber we steamed up the Sound on a Fall River boat. Through Hell Gate the stately boat sped on her way, past Blackwell's Island, and across the bows of the Brooklyn ferry-boats, crowded with passengers for the city in the early morning. Around the Battery we swept, into the North River, and slowly swung alongside of Pier 28. the hackmen yelled at us; our coach stuck at the corner of the street; a jam followed; the drivers swore; the policemen shouted and threatened; the small boys grinned and dodged between the horses; and a ward politician, with a ruby nose, looked on complacently from the steps of a corner "sample" room. In one word, we were in New York, and our village life in Hampshire was a thing of the past.

A CHRISTMAS VIGIL.

"One aim there is of endless worth,
One sole-sufficient love—
To do thy will, O God! on earth,
And reign with thee above.
From joys that failed my soul to fill,
From hopes that all begrilled,
To changeless rest in thy dear will,
O Jesus! call thy child."

EXETER BEACH was divided into two distinct parts by a line of cliff jutting far out into Exeter Bay. Below the eastern face of the cliff lay the Moore estate, and then came the town; but on the west side was an inlet, backed by dense woods, and bounded on the farther extremity by another wall of rock. This was known as Lonely Cove, and deserved its title. From it one looked straight out to the open sea; no island intervened, nor was anything visible on shore save the two long arms of frowning rock, the circuit of pine coming close to the edge of drift-wood that marked the limit of the tide, and, at the distance, a solitary house.

This had once been occupied by a man who made himself a home apart from every one, and died as lonely as he lived; since then it had been deserted, and was crumbling to decay, and many believed it to be haunted.

Along this beach, about three o'clock one Christmas Eve, Jane Moore was walking. It was a dull afternoon, with a lowering sky, and a chill in the air which foreboded rain rather than snow; but, wrapped in her velvet cloak and furs of costly sable, Jane did not heed the weather.

Her heart was full to overflowing. From the first Christmas that she could remember to the one previous to his death, she had taken that walk with her father every Christmas eve, while he talked with her of the joy of the coming day, sang to her old Christmas carols, and sought to prepare her for a holy as well as a merry feast. He had tried to be father and mother both to his motherless girl, but his heart ached as he watched her self-willed, imperious nature, often only to be curbed by her extreme love for him.

"Be patient, my friend," the old priest who knew his solicitude used to say. "It is a very noble nature. Through much suffering and failure, it may be, but *surely*, nevertheless, our Jane will live a grand life yet for the love of God." And so James Moore strove to believe and hope, till death closed his eyes when his daughter was only thirteen years old.

Heiress of enormous wealth, and of a beauty which had been famous in that county for six generations, loving keenly all that was fair, luxurious, and intellectual, Iane Moore was one of the most brilliant women of her day. Dancing and riding, conversation and music-she threw herself into each pursuit by turn with the same whole-hearted abandon which had ever characterized Yet the priest who had baptized her, and who gave her special, prayerful care and direction, laid seemingly little check upon her. Such religious duties as were given her she performed faithfully; she never missed the daily Mass or monthly confession; not a poor cottage in the village in which she was not known and loved, though as yet she only came with smiles and money and cheery words, instead of personal tendance and real self-denial. No ball shortened her prayers, no sport hindered her brief daily meditation. The priest knew that beyond all other desires that soul sought the Lord; beyond all other loves, loved him; and that she strove, though poorly and imperfectly and with daily failure, to subject her will to the higher will of God. To have drawn the curb too tightly then might have been to ruin all; the wise priest waited, and, while he waited, he prayed.

This Christmas Eve on which Jane Moore was speeding along the beach was the last she would ever spend as a merry girl in her old home. As a wife, as a mother, she might come there again, but with Epiphany her girlhood's days must end. Her heart, once given, had been given wholly, and Henry Everett was worthy of the gift; but the breaking of old ties told sorely upon Jane, who always made her burdens heavier than need be by her constant endeavor to gain her own will and way. Her handsome face looked dark and sallow that afternoon; the thin, quivering nostrils and compressed lips told of a storm in her heart.

"I cannot understand it," she said aloud. "Why must I go away? Surely it was right to wish to live always in my old home among my father's people. Why should God let Henry's father live and live and live to be ninety years old, and he be mean and troublesome? and why should my dear father die young, when I needed him? I cannot bear to go away."

And then came to her mind words said to her that very day—few words, but strong, out of a wise and loving heart—"God asks something from you this Christmas, in the midst of your joy, which I believe he will ask from you, in joy or sorrow, all your life long until he gets it. He wants the entire surrender

of your will. I do not know how he will do it, but I am sure he will never let you alone till he has gained his end. Make it your Christmas prayer that he will teach you that his will is better and sweeter than anything our wills may crave."

She flew faster along the beach, striving by the very motion to find relief for the swelling of her heart. "I cannot bear it," she cried—"to have always to do something I do not want to do! I cannot bear it. Yes, I can, and I will. God help me! But I cannot understand."

On, on, faster still, sobs choking her, tears blinding her. "I wanted so much to live and die here. God must have known it, and what difference could it make to him?"

"Don't ye! Don't ye, Tom! Ye've no right. Ye mustn't, for God's sake." The words, in a woman's shrill voice, as of one weak with fasting or illness, yet strong for the instant with the strength of a great fear or pain, broke in upon Jane's passion, and, coming to herself, she found that she was close to the Haunted House. Fear was unknown to her; in an instant she stood within the room.

Evidently some tramp, poorer than the poorest, had sought shelter—little better than none, alas!—in the wretched place. A haggard woman was crouching on a pile of sea-weed and drift-wood, holding tightly to something hidden in the ragged clothing huddled about her, striving to keep it—whatever it might be—from the grasp of a desperate, half-starved man who bent over her.

"Gie it to me," he cried. "I tell ye, Poll, I'll have it, that I wull, for all ye. And I'll trample it, and I'll burn it, that I wull. No more carrying o' crucifixes for we, and I knows on't. Gie us bread and butter, say I, and milk for the babby there."

"Nay, nay, Tom," the woman pleaded. "It's Christmas Eve. He'll send us summat the night, sure. Wait one night, Tom."

"Christmas! What's him to we? Wait! Wait till ye starve and freeze to death, lass; but I'll not do't. There's no God nowhere, and no Christmas—it's all a sham—and there sha'n't be no crucifixes neither where I bes. Ha! I's got him now, and I'll have my own way, lass."

"Stop, man!" Jane stood close beside him, with flashing eyes and her proud and fearless face. "Give me the crucifix," she said.

But she met eyes as fearless as her own, which scanned her from head to foot. "And who be you?" he asked.

"Jane Moore," she answered, with the ring that was always in her voice when she named her father's honored name.

"And what's that to me?" the man exclaimed. "Take's more'n names to save this." And he shook the crucifix defiantly.

"Stop, stop!" Jane cried. "I will pay you well to stop."

"Why then, miss?"

"Your God died on a cross," Jane answered. "You shall not harm his crucifix."

"Speak for yourself, miss! Shall not? My wull's as strong as yours, I'll warrant. God! There's no God; else why be ye in velvets and her in rags? That's why I trample this 'un."

In another moment the crucifix would have lain beneath his heel; but Jane flung herself on her knees. All pride was gone; tears rained from her eyes; she, who had been used to command and to be obeyed, pleaded like a beggar, with humble yet passionate pleading, at the feet

of this beggar and outcast.

"Wait, wait," she cried. "Oh! hear me. Truly your God was born in a stable and died upon a cross. He loves you, and he was as poor as you."

"There be no God," the man reiterated hoarsely. "It's easy for the likes o' ye to talk, all warm and

full and comfortable."

Jane wrung her hands. "I cannot explain," she said, "I cannot understand. But it must be that God knows best. He sent me. Come home with me, and I will give you food and clothes and money."

"Not I," cried the man defiantly.
"I knows that trick too well, miss.
Food and clothes belike, but a jail
too. I'll trust none. Pay me

here."

Jane turned her pocket out. "I have nothing with me," she said. "Will you not trust me?" But in his hard-set face she read her answer while she spoke.

"Very well," she continued.
"Take a note from me to my stew-

ard. He will pay you."

"Let's see't," was the brief reply.

Hastily she wrote a few words in pencil, and he read them aloud.

"Now, miss," he said, "it's not safe for me to be about town much 'fore dark, and, what's more, I won't trust ye there neither. Here ye'll bide the night through, if ye means what ye says."

"O Tom!" the woman exclaimed, breaking silence for the first time since Jane spoke, "'twull be a fearful night for the like o' she."

"Let her feel it, then," he retorted. "Wasn't her Lord she talks on born in the cold and the gloom to-night, 'cording to you and she, lass? Let her try't, say I, and see what she'll believe come morn."

Like a flash it passed through Tane's mind that her last midnight Mass among her own people was taken from her; that, knowing her uncertain ways, no one would think of seeking her till it was too late, any more than her steward, well used to her impulses, would dream of questioning a note of hers, no matter who brought it. Yet with the keen pang of disappointment a thrill of sweetness mingled. Was not her Lord indeed born in the cold and the gloom that night? "I am quite willing to wait," she said quietly.

The man went to the door. "Tide's nigh full," he said, "and night's nigh here. I'll go my ways. But mark ye, miss, I'll be waiting 'tother side, to see ye don't follow. Trust me to wait patient, till it's too

dark for ye to come."

Jane watched him till he had reached the further line of the cliff; then she buried her face in her hands. Space and time seemed as nothing; again, as for years she had been used to do, she strove to place herself in the stable at Bethlehem, and the child-longing rose within her to clasp the Holy Infant in her arms, and warm him at her heart, and clothe him like a prince. And then she remembered what the man had said: "It's easy for the likes o' ye to talk, all warm and full and comfortable."

There are natures still among us that cannot be content unless they lavish the whole box of ointment on the Master's feet. Jane turned to the heap of sea-weed where the half-frozen woman lay. "Can you rise for a minute?" she asked gently. "I am going to change clothes with you. Yes, I am strong, and can walk about and bear it all; but you will freeze if you lie here." And putting down the woman's feeble resis-

tance with a bright, sweet will, Jane had her way.

Half exhausted, her companion sank back upon her poor couch, and soon fell asleep; and when the baby woke, Jane took it from her, lest its pitiful wailing should rouse the mother, to whom had come blessed forgetfulness of her utter inability to feed or soothe it. She wrapped the child in her rags, and walked the room with it for hours that night. It seemed to her that they must freeze to death if she stopped. For a time the wind raged furiously and the rain fell in torrents; no blessed vision came to dispel the darkness of her vigil; no ecstasy to keep the cold from biting her; she felt its sting sharply and painfully the whole night through. The first few hours were the hardest she had ever spent, yet she would not have exchanged them for the sweetest joy this world had ever given her. "My Lord was cold," she kept saying. "My Lord was cold to-night."

By and by-it seemed to her that it must be very late—the storm passed over. She went to the door. The clouds were lifting, and far away the sea was glimmering faintly in the last rays of a hidden and setting moon. Below a mass of dark clouds, and just above the softly-lighted sea, shone out a large white star. Across the water, heaving heavily like one who has fallen asleep after violent weeping, and still sobs in slumber, came to her the sound of the clock striking midnight; and then all the chimes rang sweetly, and she knew that the Mass she had longed for had be-

"I cannot bear it!" she cried; then felt the child stir on her breast, and, gathering it closer to her, she said slowly: "God understands. His way must be best."
And she tried to join in spirit with
those in church who greeted the
coming of the Lord.

Surely there was some reason for her great disappointment and for her suffering that night. Reason? Was it not enough to be permitted thus to share His first night of deprivation? And presently she began to plan for herself God's planhow the man would return, and find her there wet and cold and hungry, and would learn why she had done it, and would never doubt God again. She fancied them all at home with her, employed by her, brought back to a happy, holy life; and she prayed long and earnestly for each.

He did come, as soon as the gray morning twilight broke—came with haste, bade his wife rise, and take her child and follow him. He gave no time for the words Jane wished to speak; but when the woman said that she must return the garments which had kept her warm, and perhaps alive, that night, Jane cried: "No, no! It is as if I had kep: our Lady warm for once, and carried her Child, not yours." And she clasped the baby passionately, kissing it again and again.

The man stood doubtful, then tore the rich cloak from his wife's shoulders, seized the mean one which it had replaced, wrapped her in it, hiding thus the costly attire, that might have caused suspicion, then looked about the room.

"The crucifix?" he said.

"Is it not mine?" Jane asked.

He pointed to the woman. "It's her bit o' comfort," he said. "Gie it to her, miss. Plenty ye's got, I wot. I'll ne'er harm 'un again."

There was no more farewell that that; no more promise of better things. In a few minutes they hac disappeared among the pines; and cold, suffering, disheartened, Jane made her way homeward. To her truest home first; for bells were ringing for first Mass, and Jane stole into church, and, clad in beggar's rags beneath her velvet cloak, knelt in real humility to receive her Lord. "I do not understand," she said to him, sobbing softly. "Nothing that I do succeeds as I like. But, my Jesus, I am sure thy will is best, only I wanted so much to help them for thee. Why was it, my Jesus?"

But the years went by, and though Christmas after Christmas Jane remembered with a pang that great disappointment, her longings and her questions remained unanswered.

And so it was in almost everything. Her life after that strange Christmas Eve was one of constant, heroic, personal service for others, in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The brilliant woman was never seen again at ball or hunt, but beside the beds of the sick and suffering she was daily to be found, making the most painful, repulsive cases her special care. And she, who had delighted in daintiest apparel, never wore again after that Christmas morning jewels or costly clothing. "I have tasted once the sweetness of faring like my Lord," she said impetuously to her husband. "Do not break my heart by making me all warm and full and comfortable again." whose high soul answered nobly to her own, never tried to hold her back, but followed her eagerly in her earnest following of her Lord.

Yet the self-willed nature cost its owner many sufferings before it learned submission to the divine Master. It pleased God that Jane Everett should live to an advanced

and very strong old age, and it also pleased him through all those years to conform her will to his by constant and peculiar trials. The husband whom she loved with an almost idolatrous love was taken from her, without an instant's warning, by a fearful accident. Her sons, whom she dedicated to God's holy priesthood, died in their cradles; her daughters grew into the fairest bloom of womanhood, only to become the brides of death. Yet nothing quenched the fire in her eye, and the cry of her heart for years was still its old cry: "O God! I cannot bear it. Yes, I can. God's will is best. But I cannot understand."

One Advent the last remaining friend of her youth sent to her, begging her to come with haste to pass with her the last Christmas they could expect to be together on earth; and the brave old woman, though craving to spend the holy season near her darlings' graves. went forth to face the inclement weather with as stout a heart as in her youth she had sped along Exeter Beach under the threatening sky. In a little village, with no one near who knew her except her servants. Death laid his hand upon her who had desired him for many days.

"This is a serious illness," the physician said to her. Then, reading rightly the spirit with which he had to deal, he added: "A sickness unto death, madam."

"Harness the horses, then," she said, lifting herself, "and let me get to Ewemouth and die there."

"Send for a priest," the doctor answered her. "You have no time to lose."

"It has been always so, father," Jane said, looking up pitifully into the face of the priest when at last he came. "From the time that I first earnestly gave myself to God, up to this time, he has thwarted me in every way. Sixty years ago this very Christmas Eve he did it. It all comes back to me as hard to bear as then; and all my life has been like that." And slowly and with pauses Jane told the story of her night at Lonely Cove.

"It has always been so, father. Whenever I have loved any one or tried to help any one, I have failed or they have left me."

"My daughter," the priest replied. "God's work in a life like yours is far more the subjection of the will than the number of holy actions for others. Be sure that what we think failure is often success in God's eves and through his power. He asks one last sacrifice from you. Madam, God has brought you here to add the crowning blessing to your life—the opportunity of a last and entire surrender of your will to his most blessed will. Will you offer to him your whole life, that to you seems so incomplete and marred, judged by your own plans and wishes, saying to him without reserve that you believe, certainly, that his way is far better than yours?"

He held the crucifix before her, and suddenly the long years seemed to vanish like a dream, and she felt once more the biting cold in the haunted house at Lonely Cove, and again a child nestled upon her heart, bringing with it the thought of the manger-bed, and the question, Why should so much suffering be? And from that manger her thoughts returned to the hard couch of the cross; and to all that mystery of suffering came the mysterious answer, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

She took and kissed the offered

crucifix. "Yes, father," she said meekly. "May the most just, most high, and most amiable will of God be done, praised, and eternally exalted in all things. I had rather die here, O my God! since it is thy blessed will, than in any other place on earth."

"Amen," said the priest.

But when the last sacraments had been administered, and Jane lay calm and patient now, waiting her release, the priest drew near to her, and looked with a great reverence upon her face.

"My daughter," he said "it is at times the will of God to show us even here the use of some part at least of what he has let us do for him. Be sure his Sacred Heart remembers all the rest as well. Sixty years ago this Christmas Eve my father was saved from a great sin, my mother and I from death, by a Christian woman's love for her Lord. The first confession I ever heard was my own father's last. He told me that from the time he saw that rich young girl in rags endure the biting cold for God, faith lived in his heart, and would not die. I saw him pass away from earth in penitence and hope. For more than thirty years I have labored among God's poor as your thank-offering. Madam, my mother by the love of God, God sends you this token that he has worked his own work by means of you all your life long. He sends you this token, because you have given him the thing hemost desired of you-your will."

Jane folded her aged hands humbly. "Not unto us, O Lord!" she said, low and faint, and then a voiceas of a son and priest at once spokeclearly, seeing her time had come: "Depart, O Christian soul! in peace."

MADAME'S EXPERIMENT,

A SAINT AGNES' EVE STORY.

46 MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NOR YOUR WAYS MY WAYS, SAITH THE LORD."

MADAME the Countess of Hohenstein stood at the window of the great hall of her palace, waiting for the coach which was to take her to a château some leagues distant, where she was to grace a grand entertainment, and to be kept for a whole night by her hosts as an especial treasure. For Madame the Countess of Hohenstein, spite of her sixty years and her three grown sons, was a famous beauty still and a brilliant conversationist, and few were her rivals, young or old, throughout the kingdom. But her face was clouded as she waited in her stately hall that January afternoon, and she listened with a pained expression to the sound of a footstep overhead pacing steadily up and down. She touched a bell presently.

"Tell your master," she said to the servant who answered it, "that I wish to see him again before I leave." And soon down the winding stairway she watched a young man come with the same steady pace which might have been heard overhead for a half-hour past.

No need to ask the relationship between the two. Black, waving hair, broad brow, set lips, firm chin, the perfect contour of the handsome face—all these were the son's heritage of remarkable beauty from his queenly mother; but the headstrong pride and excessive love which shone from her eyes as he came in sight met eyes very different from them. Large and black indeed they were, but their intense look, however deep the passion it bespoke, told of an unearthly passion and a fire that is divine.

"Ah! Heinrich love," his mother said, "once more, come with me."

"Nay, little mother," he answered—the caressing diminutive sounding strangely as addressed to her in her pomp of attire and stately presence—"you said I need not go; that you did not care for me at the baron's."

"Not so, Heinrich. I care for you everywhere, everywhere. I am lost without you, love of my soul. But I know you hate it, and, if you must stay from any place, better that than some others. There are no maidens there I care for, my son."

She watched the calm forehead contract as she spoke. "There! as ever," she exclaimed. "Wilt never hear woman mentioned without a frown? You are no monk yet, child, at your twentieth year; nor ever shall be, if I can help it. It is enough for me, surely, to have given two sons to the priesthood, without yielding up my last one, my

hope and my pride."

Heinrich made no answer, for the sound of the carriage-wheels was heard, and he offered his mother his hand, led her down the steps, and placed her in the coach. She drew him towards her, and kissed him passionately. "Farewell, my dearest," she said. "I count the minutes till we meet again." And she never ceased to watch him as long as the mansion was visible.

He was a sight of which many a mother might have been proud, as he stood there bare headed, the winter sun lighting his face, the winter wind lifting his dark locks, the fresh bloom of youth enhancing his peculiar beauty. His mother sighed deeply as the coach turned a corner which hid him from her view— a sigh often repeated during the course of her journey.

It was a full hour before she was out of her own domains, though the horses sped swiftly over the frozen ground. All those broad acres, all that noble woodland, all those peasant homes, were hers; and for miles behind her the land stretching north and west belonged

with it, for sne nad married the owner of the next estate, and, widowed, held it for her son. But at her death all these possessions must be divided among distant unknown kinsmen, if Heinrich persisted in the desire, which had been his from early boyhood, to become a monk. His mother's whole heart was set against it. Her aim in life was to find for him a wife whom he would love, and whom he would bring to their home; she longed to hold before her death her son's son on her knee.

The coach stopped as the sun was setting; and at the palace door, too eager for a sight of her to wait in courtly etiquette within, host and hostess stood ready to greet this friend of a lifetime.

"No Heinrich?" they cried, laughing. "A truant always. And we have that with us to-day which will make you wish him here. No matter what! You will see in time."

And in time she saw indeed. Going slowly up the marble stairs a half-hour later, a vision of magnificent beauty, with her ermine mantle wrapped about her, the hood fallen back from her regal head, the eyes with the pained look of disappointment and longing still lingering in them in spite of the loving welcomes lavished upon her, she came, in a turn of the stairs, upon another vision of beauty radiant as her own, and extremely opposite.

Coming slowly down towards ner was a young girl, tall and slight, with a skin of dazzling fairness, where the blue veins in temple and neck were plain to see; a delicate tint like blush-roses upon the cheek; great waves of fair hair sending back a glint of gold to the torches 'ust lighted in the hall;

eves very large, and so deeply set that at first their violet blue seemed black-eves meek and downcast, and tender as a dove's, but in them, too, a look of pain and yearning. The face at first view was like that of an innocent child, but beneath its youthfulness lay an expression which bespoke a wealth of love and strength and patience, unawakened as yet, but of unusual force. Skilled to read character by years of experience in kings' palaces, madame the countess read her well-so far as she could read at all.

Evidently the maiden saw nothing that was before her; but madame held her breath in surprise and delight, and stood still, waiting her approach. Not till she came close to her did the girl look up, then she too stopped with a startled "Pardon madame"; and at sight of the timid, lovely eyes, at the sound of the voice—like a flute, like water rippling softly, like a south wind sighing in the seaside pines-madame opened her arms, and caught the stranger to her heart. "My child, my child," she cried, "how beautiful you are!"

"Madame, madame," the girl panted in amazement, carried away in her turn at the sudden sight of this lovely lady, who, she thought, could be, in her regal beauty and attire, no less than a princess—"Madame sees herself surely!"

The countess laughed outright at the artless, undesigned compliment. "And as charming as beautiful," she said. "I must see more of you, my love."

Then, kissing the cheek, red now as damask roses, she passed on. In the hall above her hostess stood with an arch smile on her lips. "Ah! Gertrude, we planned it well," she said. "Fritz and I have been

watching for that meeting. It was a brilliant tableau."

"But who is she, Wilhelmina? Tell me quickly. She is loveliness itself."

"'Tis but a short story, dear. We found her in Halle. Her name is Elizabeth Wessenberg. She is wellborn, but her family are strict Lutherans. She—timid, precious little dove!—became a Catholic by some good grace of the good God. But it was a lonely life, and I begged her off from it for a white. Oh! but her parents winced to see her go. They hate the name even of Catholic. That is all—only she sings like a lark, and she hardly knows what to make of her new life and faith, it is so strange to her."

"That is all! Thanks, Wilhelmina. I will be with you soon. I long to see her once again."

All that evening the countess kept Elizabeth near her, and every hour her admiration increased. A maiden so beautiful, yet so ignorant of her own charms, so unworldly, so innocent, she had never seen. Alone in her room that night she fell trembling upon her knees—poor, passionate, self-willed mother!—before the statue of the Holy. Mother bearing the divine Son in her arms, and she held up her hands and prayed aloud.

"I have found her at last," she cried—" a child who has won her way into my heart at once with no effort of her own; a pearl among all pearls; one whom my boy must love. Lord Jesus, have I not given thee two sons? Give me now one son to keep for my own, and not for thee. Grant that he may love this precious creature, fit for him as though thou thyself hadst made her for him, even as Eve was made for Adam." And then she covered her face, and sobbed and

pleaded with long, wordless prayers.

The next day saw her on her homeward way, but not alone. She had coaxed in her irresistible fashion till she had obtained for herself from her friend a part of. Elizabeth's visit: and Elizabeth felt as if she were living in a dream, there in the costly coach, wrapped in furs and watched by those beautiful eves. Constantly the countess talked with her, leading the conversation delicately in such a manner that she found out much in regard to Elizabeth's home, and penetrated into her hidden sorrows in regard to the coldness and lack of sympathy there. And it needed no words to tell that this was a heart which craved sympathy and love most keenly; which longed for something higher and stronger than itself to lean upon. Every time she looked at the sensitive face, endowed with such exquisite refinement of beauty: every time the childlike yet longing, unsatisfied eyes met hers: every time the musical voice fell upon her ears, fearing ever an echo of that same craving for something more and better than the girl had yet known, madame's mother-heart throbbed towards her, and it seemed to her that she could hardly wait for the blessing which, she had persuaded herself, was surely coming to her at last.

Now and then she spoke of the country through which they passed; and to Elizabeth it was almost incredible that such wealth could belong to one person only. Now and then she spoke of "my son" in a tone of exultant love, and then Elizabeth trembled a little; for she dreaded to meet this stranger. Very grand and proud she fancied him; one who would

hardly notice at all a person so insignificant as herself.

"Here is the village chapel, Elizabeth," madame said, as the coach stopped suddenly. "Will you scold, my little one, if I go in for a minute to the priest's house? Or perhaps you would like to visit the Blessed Sacrament while I am gone?"

Yes, that was what Elizabeth would like indeed; and there she knelt and prayed, never dreaming how much was being said about her only next door.

"Father!" madame exclaimed impetuously to the gray-haired priest who rose to greet her, "I must have Mass said for my intention every morning for a week. See, here is a part only of my offering." And she laid a heavy purse upon the table. "If God grant my prayer, it shall be doubled, tripled."

"God's answers cannot be bought, madame," the priest said sadly, "nor can they be forced."

"They must be this time, then, father. You must make my intention your own. Will you not? Will you not for this once, father?"

"What is it, then, my daughter?"
"Father, do not be angry. It is
the old hunger wrought up to desperation. I cannot give my boy
to be a monk!"

The priest's face darkened.

"No! no!" madame hurried on.
"It is too much to ask of me.
And now I have found a bride for him at last. She waits for me in the chapel, fair and pure as the lilies. I am taking her home in triumph."

"Does Heinrich know of this?"

"Not one word. He cannot fail to love her when he sees her. It is for this I ask your prayers."

The priest pushed away the purse. "I will have none of this," he said. "It is far better to see my poor suffer than that this unrighteous deed should be done. You call yourself a Catholic, and pride yourself because your house was always Catholic; and yet you dare say that anything is too much for God to ask of you! I am an old man, madame, and have had many souls to deal with, but I never yet saw one whose vocation was more plain than Heinrich's to the entire service of God's church. Will you dare run counter to God's will?"

"Nay, father, it cannot be his will. Our very name would die out—our heritage pass from us!"

"And suppose it does! shall promise you that if Heinrich marries there shall ever be child of his to fill his place? And what are place, and name, and heritage, madame? That which death, or war, or a king's caprice may snatch away in a moment. But vour spiritual heritage shall never die. : What mother on earth but might envy you if you give your three sons-your all-to God! Many are the children of the desolate, more than of her that hath an husband, saith the Lord. maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house the joyful mother of children. There is a place and a name within his walls better than sons and daughters. Do you dream what risk you run, what part you play, when you would tempt from his calling one who, if you leave God to work his own pleasure, shall hereafter shine as the stars through all eternity?"

She did not answer back with pride. Instead, her whole face grew soft, and the large tears filled her eyes and ran slowly down her cheeks. "I want to do right," she said humbly; "but I cannot feel that it is right. Father, see: I will not ask you to make my intention yours. But I promise you one thing: I must ask God to grant me this blessing, but it shall be the last time. If I fail now, let his will be done. And do you, father, ask him to make it plain to e what his will is."

. "God bless you, daughter!" the old priest answered, much moved by her humility. "I will pray that indeed. But still I warn you that I think you are doing wrong in so much as trying such an experiment as this which you have undertaken."

"No, no," she cried again.
"No, no, father. This once I must try, or my heart will break."

Again in the carriage, she pressed Elizabeth to her closely, and kissed her, and said words of passionate love, finding relief thus for the pent-up feelings of her heart; but Elizabeth knew not how to reply. It troubled and perplexed her-this lavish affection; for she could not repay it in kind. It only served to waken a suffering which she had known from childhood, a strange, unsatisfied yearning within her, which came at the sight of a lovely landscape, or the sound of exquisite music, or the caresses of some friend. She wanted more: and where and what was that "more," which seemed to lie beyond everything, and which could never grasp?

She felt it often during her visit—that visit where attention was constantly 'bestowed on her, and she lived in the midst of such luxury as she had never known before. Something in Heinrich's face seemed to her to promise an answer to her questionings—it was so at rest,

so settled; and this, more than anything else about him, interested and attracted her. Madame saw the interest, without guessing the cause. She felt also that Heinrich was not wholly insensible to Elizabeth's presence; and though she asked him no direct questions, she contrived to turn conversation into the channels which could not fail to engage him, and which the young convert also cared for most.

Elizabeth decided that Heinrich knew more than any one else, but even he tired her sometimes. "He knows too much," she thought, "and he is so cold and indifferent. Yet he would not be himself if he were more like madame; and she is too tender. Oh! what does it all mean? There is nothing that makes one content except church, and one cannot be always there."

So passed the time till S. Agnes' Eve. That night, when the young people entered the dining-hall, madame was absent. She sent a message that they must dine without her, as she had a severe headache, and Elizabeth might come to her an hour after dinner.

The meal was a silent one. When it was over, and they went into the library, Heinrich seated himself at the organ. Grand chorals, funeral marches full of mourning and awe and hope, Mass music welcoming the coming of the Lord of Sabaoth, filled the lofty room. When he ceased, Elizabeth was sobbing irrepressibly.

"Forgive me, forgive me!" she said. "I cannot help it. O monsieur! I know not what it means. Love and hate, beauty and deformity, joy and suffering—I cannot understand. Nothing satisfies, and to be a Catholic makes the craving worse. Is it because I am only

just beginning, and that I shall understand better by and by?"

He stood at a little distance from her, looking not at her at all, but upward and far away.

"I will tell mademoiselle a story. if she will permit it," he said. "Many years ago there was a princess, very beautiful, very wise, and very wealthy. Her councillors begged that she would marry, and at last she told them that she would do so, if they would find for her the prince she should describe. He should be so rich that he should esteem all the treasures of the Indies as a little dust: so wise that no man could ever mention in his presence aught that he did not already know; so fair that no child of man should compare with him in beauty; so spotless in his soul that the very heavens should not be pure in his sight. They knew not where to find that prince, but their lady knew."

He paused, though not as for an answer. He had guessed well his mother's plans and hopes; he fathomed as truly Elizabeth's nature; and when he spoke again, it was as no one except the priest of God had ever heard him speak:

"There are some souls whom no one and nothing on earth can possibly satisfy. Beauty, and learning, and friendship, and home, and love, each alike wearies them. God only can content them, and he is enough-God alone. To such souls he gives himself, if they sincerely desire it. It is a love beyond all imaginable earthly love. It satisfies, yet leaves a constant craving which we have no wish should cease. He understands everything: even those things which we cannot explain to ourselves. It is he finding whom the soul loveth him, and will not let him go."

After saying this, he sat down once more at the organ, and played again till the hour named by madame arrived. Elizabeth found her pale and suffering, but with a glad look in her eyes.

"You have had talk together, then," she cried. "I heard the music cease for a while. And is he not charming and good, my

Heinrich?"

"Yes," Elizabeth said dreamily.

"He made me understand a little to-night—better than any one has ever done before."

"Is that so, my little one? And

how then?"

"Here," Elizabeth said innocently, laying her hand on her heart, and with no suspicion of the meaning which the countess attached to the act. "If I could only understand more—more."

"You will in time, most dear one—in time, in time." And oh! the exulting ring in madame's voice.
"But see, my precious, what I have

to show you.'

A chest was drawn up beside madame's easy-chair. She opened it, and before Elizabeth's dazzled eves lay jewels of wondrous lustre and value-long strings of pearls, changing opals with the fire-spark trembling in them, sapphires blue as the sky, emeralds green as the sea, and glittering diamonds. Madame drew out the costly things, and adorned Elizabeth with one set after another by turn, watching the effect. Last of all, she touched a spring, and took from a secret drawer a set of pearls, large and round, with a soft amber tint in them. These she held caressingly and sighed.

"Look, Elizabeth," she said.
"Forty years ago this very night I wore them, when I was a girl like you. There was a great ball here.

Some one—ah! but how grand and beautiful he looked; my poor heart remembers well, and is sore with the memory now—some one begged me to try the charm of S. Agnes' Eve. Dost know it, dear? Nay? Then you shall try it too. Go supperless to rest; look not to left or right, nor yet behind you, but pray God to show you that which shall satisfy your heart of hearts."

"Did he show you, madame?"

Madame sighed heavily. "Alas! love, alas! What contents us here? I had it for a time, and then God took it from me. No prouder wife than I, no prouder mother; but husband and sons are gone, all except my Heinrich. Pray God to keep him for me, Elizabeth, Elizabeth."

"And who, then, was S. Agnes, madame? And shall I pray to her

that prayer?"

Madame looked aghast, then smiled an amused yet troubled smile. "Nay, child, I thought not of that. S. Agnes was one who loved our blessed Lord alone, not man. She died rather than yield to earthly love and joy."

"But why, madame?"

"O child, child! But I forget, You have only just begun the Catholic life, my sweet. God's love, then, is enough for some people; but they are monks and nuns, not common Christians like you and me and Heinrich. We could not live in that way, could we, Elizabeth—you and Heinrich and I?"

"And God would never grow tired of us, madame! Nor ever die! Nor ever misunderstand! O madame! I think we could not live with less." And Elizabeth stood up suddenly, as if too agitated to remain quiet

"Ah! love, you are only just a

convert. In one's first excitement one fancies many things. You are meant to serve God in the world, my dear, for many years to come—you and my Heinrich. Pray for him to-night."

But hurrying along the hall to her own room, Elizabeth whispered passionately in her heart: "I do not want to pray for him. Let him pray for himself. His saints pray for him too, and God loves him, and he does not need me. Does madame, then, suppose that he could ever care for me, or I for him? I want more than he can give—more—more! Show me my heart's desire, O God, my God!"

In her excitement and in the darkness she laid her hand on the wrong door, and, opening it, found herself in an old gallery, at the end of which a light was glimmering. Scarcely heeding what she did, she moved toward it, and found that she was in the choir of the castle chapel. The door fell gently to behind her, but did not close, and Elizabeth was alone, Alone? The aisles were empty, the organ was still, the priest was gone; but before the sacred shrine the steady ray of the lamp told that He who filleth the heaven of heavens was dwelling in his earthly temple, and that unseen angels guarded all the place.

But of angels or men Elizabeth thought not. Silently, slowly she moved onward, her hands pressed upon her heart, whose passionate beating grew still as she came nearer to the Sacred Heart which alone could fully comfort, fully strengthen, fully understand. Slowly she moved, as one who knows that some great joy is coming surely, and who lengthens willingly the bliss of expectation.

And so she reached a narrow flight of steps, and made her way gently down, and knelt. Outside, in the clear night, a great wind rose, and rocked the castle-tower, but Elizabeth knew it not. She was conscious only of the intense stillness of that unseen Presence; of peace flooding her whole soul like a river; of the nearness of One who is strength and love and truth, infinite and eternal.

"Show me my heart's desire, O God, my God!" she sighed.

God, my God! She lifted up her eyes, and there, above the shrine, beheld the great crucifix of Hohenstein, brought from the far-off East by a Crusader knight. She lifted up her eyes, and saw the haggard face full of unceasing prayer, the sunken cheeks, the pierced hands and feet, the bones, easy to number, in the worn and tortured body, the side with its deep wound where a spear had passed.

Yet, looking upward steadily, all her excitement gone, a sacred calm upon her inmost soul, Elizabeth knew that her prayer was answered, her lifelong hunger satisfied. God had given her her heart's desire.

God, my God! No love but his could satisfy; and his could with an eternal content. To that Heart, pierced for her, broken for her, she could offer no less than her whole heart; and that she must offer, not by constraint, but simply because she loved him beyond all, above all, and knew that in him, and in him only, she was sure of an unfailing, an everlasting love.

Madame, seeking her in the early morning, found her room unoccupied, then noticed the gallery-door ajar, and, trembling, sought her there. Elizabeth had kept S. Agnes' Eve indeed, but it was before the shrine of S. Agnes' Spouse and Lord.

"My daughter," the countess

said, using the word for the first time, and with oh! how sad a tone— "what have you done this night,

my daughter?"

Elizabeth lifted hand and face toward the shrine. "Madame," she answered slowly, as one who speaks unconsciously in sleep, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I hold him, and I will not let him go."

let him go."

God himself had made his way plain indeed before Madame the Countess of Hohenstein in this her last struggle with his will. The very plan which she had chosen to gain her cherished hopes had crushed them. Not priest or son, but the girl whom she herself had named for her final trial, had shown her that God's purposes were far aside from hers.

"Take all, O Lord!" she cried, while her tears fell like rain. "Take all I have. I dare not struggle

longer."

One son gave up his life a martyr in the blood-stained church in Japan. Another endured a lifelong martyrdom among the lepers of the Levant, winning souls yet more tainted than the bodies home again to God. And one, the youngest, and the fairest, and the dearest, was seen in China and in India, in Peru and in Mexico, going without question wherever he was sent, for the greater glory of God; but he was never seen in his German home again. After they once left her, their mother never beheld their faces. And she who had been taken to her heart as a daughter entered an order in a distant land.

Yet none ever heard madame the last Countess of Hohenstein murmur against her lot. Clearly,

tenderly, patiently, more and more did God vouchsafe to make his way plain to her. In chapel, day by day, she watched the decaying banners which told of the fields her fathers won: saw the monuments to men of her race who had fought and died for their king and their land; read the names once proudly vaunted, now almost forgotten. What was fame like this to the honor God had showered on her? Souls east, and west brought safe to him; life laid down for the Lord of lords; a seed not to be reckoned; a lineage which could never fail; sons and daughters to stand at last in that multitude which no one can number, who have come out of great tribulation, with fadeless palms of victory in their hands such was her place and name in the house of God.

The quaint German text upon her tombstone puzzled travellers greatly, and those who could decipher it wondered but the more. It ran thus:

Requiescat in Pace.

GERTRUDE,

Twenty-ninth and Last Countess of Hohenstein.

The children of thy barrenness shall still say in thy ears: The place is too strait for me; make me room to dwell in. And thou shalt say in thy heart: Who hath begotten me these? I was barren, and brought not forth, led away, and captive; and who hath brought up these? I was destitute and alone; and these, where were they?

Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and will set up my standard to the people. And they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and carry thy daughters upon their shoulders. And thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be con-

founded that wait for him.

THE GREAT STRIKE AT ERRICKDALE.

ERRICKDALE is famous for its coal-pits. It has dozens of them. All night long their fires glow red through the darkness, and all day the sound of pick and hammer, and the creak of rusty iron chains dragging heavily-loaded cars up the slope of the mines into the light, and the cry of the miners, and the tramp of their hob-nailed shoes as they come and go, fill the place with noisy life. It is a lonely place otherwise. close to the sea-coast. A ponderous stone wharf juts far out into the water, and a tramway runs down to it for the use of the cars which take the coal to the vessels that are constantly loading.

The village of Errickdale, at the time of our story, consisted of the black buildings connected with the mines, the rows of tumble-down tenements where the miners lived. and one spacious, rambling, oldfashioned dwelling, built a century previous by the first owner and opener of the mines, and preserved intact ever since, in its antique and solid elegance, by each new owner of the place. Eight months of the year it was closed, with the exception of a few zooms occupied by the agent, the old housekeeper, and two servants; one other apartment being always kept in readiness to receive the master whenever, for any reason, he chose to make his appearance.

But for four months, from June to October, the whole house was thrown open and filled with a brilliant company, who spent the summer days in merry idleness, and made Errickdale a scene of delight.

Beautiful it was always, in spite of its Ioneliness—a loneliness so extreme that not another town or village. or house or hut, was to be met with for a dozen miles around it, except Teal, lying hidden from sight behind the hills, and five good miles away at that, and the lighthouse which rose up eerily on the summit of the dangerous, ugly rock-ledge in the centre of Errick Bay. That bay gave ample opportunity for sailing, rowing, bathing, fishing; the beach was firm and good for those who cared to walk; the rocks were bold and tempting for those who cared to climb. In the fields the wild pink roses bloomed, and strawberries. raspberries, baked-apple berries, and blueberries followed one upon the other in superabundance. heaps of coal-dust, the begrimed men, the care-worn women and dirty children, the comfortless dwellings, marred very much the beauty of the place; but what would be the place without them? The guests who came there soon forgot such trifles as the days sped by in merry-making; and in the city of Malton a summer at Errickdale was spoken of as a season of unrivalled pleasure.

It was in Malton that John Rossetti, the present owner of Errick mines, had his palace-like city home. There he had collected such treasures as few men could boast, even in that city, famed for its eager pursuit of the beautiful and the costly; and all of them he lavished upon the only being who made life dear to him—the daughter whom his idolized young wife had left to

him when, at the child's birth, she died.

It is a marvel that Eleanora Rossetti grew up as amiable and gentle as she was; for she scarcely knew what it meant to have a wish thwarted or the merest whim of her fancy ungratified. Delicate and fair like some sheltered plant, she won love and tenderness wherever she went, and it seemed to her only as the air she breathed—she knew nothing else. That she should yield her will to another's never entered her mind; that she was to do anything for others was an idea quite unknown to her. Life was hers to enjoy; hearts were hers to command; let her do what she would, no one wished to hinder her. She saw the beggars in the streets of Malton, she saw the poorly-clad people in Errickdale, but they never weighed upon her heart in the least. They must be very lazy or very shiftless, she thought-if she ever thought of them at all.

With the approaching winter of her eighteenth birthday—the winter of that great strike at Errickdale which was to set the country ringing-there came many prophecies of want and famine, but Eleanora did not heed them. She had a little dinner-party one evening. They were sitting around the table loaded with costly silver and delicately-painted china and rare viands. "Papa," cried Eleanora from the head of the board, where she presided in girlish state, her clear voice ringing down to him like a flute and attracting every one's attention-"papa, I mean to keep my eighteenth birthday by a masque-ball at Errickdale." then, glancing along each file of delighted and expectant guests with her brightest smile, "You are all invited at once," she said, "without further ceremony. The night of the 20th of January, remember. How I hope there will be snow underfoot and stars overhead and a biting frost! There will be bed and board for all, though some of the beds may have to be on the floor; and sleighs or carriages will be waiting at Teal station. Oh! how delightful it will be!"

Nobody waited to see if permission would be granted her. Eleanora Rossetti always had her way. At once a Babel of voices arose.

"We will make summer of winter," Eleanora said. "The whole conservatory shall be sent down. It shall be a ball of the old régime; and mind, all of you, no one shall be admitted who does not come dressed as a courtier of some sort to grace my palace halls. I shall never be eighteen again, and I mean to celebrate it royally."

"She looks like a princess this moment," said a youth on her right, loudly enough for her to hear, and to make her blush with pleasure; and like a princess she looked indeed, slender and tall and stately, in her heavy purple robe, with ermine and rare laces at the neck and wrists, and diamonds in her ears that sparkled no more brightly than her eyes.

Down in Errickdale that night a northeast gale was blowing, the waves were dashing their spray high up over the wharf and against the cliffs, and the rain drove in slant sheets across the bay, where the red eye of the lighthouse glared steadily.

In a cottage of three rooms, apart from the tenements, yet little better than they, another John is sitting. John O'Rourke this, an Irishman, come eighteen years since from the old country; and with him sits his only daughter.

who will be eighteen in February. Bridget O'Rourke has no need to fear the verdict if she is compared with the heiress of Errickdale; she is full as tall and stately, and her dark, severe beauty would be noticeable anywhere. But there is no sparkle in her eyes, that are heavy with unshed tears, and no smile is on her lips.

These people are not poor, as Errickdale counts poverty. It is much, very much, to have a house to yourself, even though it be of three rooms only, and floor and walls are bare. It is much to wear whole clothes, though the dress is cotton print and the coat is fustian. It is much to have plenty of bread and cheese and a bit of cold meat on your table, and to have a decent table to sit at. Errickdale counts these things luxuries. John O'Rourke is a sort of factorum for the agent, and, next to him, has higher wages than any other man on the place; but, for all that, his brow is lowering to-night, and as he sits in moody silence his fingers work and his hands are clenched, as though he were longing for a fight with some one.

"You're not eating, Bridget, my girl," he said at last, draining the last drop of his cup of tea. "You're

not as hungry as I."

She pushed her plate away. "I can't eat, father," she said. "Down in the hollow Smith's wife and babes are crying with hunger, and over at Rutherford's the girls haven't a shoe to their feet in this bitter weather."

"And so you must go hungry too,

girl?" he asked.

"I can't eat," she said again. "It chokes me. Why should I have good things, and they go starving? I wish I was starving with them!"

"Tut, tut, girl! What help would

that be? And what's Smith, anyhow, and Smith's boys, but Orangemen, that hoot at ye Sundays, and laugh at your going ten miles, all, as they say, to worship images?"

Bridget smiled faintly. This righteous John O'Rourke was no very fervent Catholic in his deeds, whatever his words might go to prove. It was seldom that he found himself able to foot those good ten miles with her, though she did it regularly, in spite of ridicule and difficulty.

"Orangemen or not," she answered, "they're flesh and blood like me. God made 'em. If I try to eat, I think I see them with nothing, and I long to give all I have to them."

"I tell ye," O'Rourke exclaimed,
"times are bad enough now, but
they'll be worse soon, if master
don't take heed. There'll be a
strike in Errickdale before the winter's out."

"O father! no. I hope not. Nothing like that would ever move the master. He's that set in his own way, he would only hold out stronger against 'em—he would."

"I think so myself, girl—I think so myself. I've known him well these eighteen years; he's firm as rock. But the men don't credit it. They are murmuring low now, but it will be loud shouting before we know it. Bridget, I'll to Malton and see the master myself, come morning."

"Yes, father," said Bridget; "and I'll go with you and speak with Miss Eleanora."

A few hours later, the city lady and the Irish girl stood face to face in Eleanora's bouldoir. There was a startled look in Eleanora's eyes. What strange story is this which Bridget tells her? There must be some mistake about it.

"They are very poor in Errick-dale," Bridget said slowly, keeping down the quiver from her voice and the tears from her eye. "House after house they have nothing but potatoes or mush to eat, and nothing but rags to wear. I don't think it's the master's fault maybe. Sometimes I fear the agent is not all he should be, miss."

As if John Rossetti did not know the character of the man whom he had left in power among his miners! Alas for Bridget! and alas for Er-

rickdale!

"But do you suffer, Bridget?" and Eleanora looked at her compassionately, and then with deep admiration. She had let her talk, had let her stay, where carelessly she would have sent off any other, because it was such a delight to her to see that face in its grave and regular beauty, and to hear the rich voice with its sorrowful cadence like the minor note of an organ chant. Even had she been of like station and wealth with herself, Eleanora would have felt no pangs of jealous fear; for her own beauty and that of Bridget were of too perfect and delicious a contrast for that, and her trained artistic taste was considering it with pleasure all the while that their talk went on.

"Not that way," Bridget answered her. "I've food and clothes a plenty myself. But it's as if the hunger and want were tugging at my heart instead of my body, by day and by night. The lean faces and the wailing come between me and all else. Miss Eleanora, I wish you could once see them—only once."

"What's this! Bridget O'Rourke here too? A well-planned plot, truly." And John Rossetti strode into the room as though on the point of turning the girl out from it, only his daughter, coming to meet him, stepped unwittingly between.

"Yes, papa," she said, "it's Bridget, come to the city, I suppose, for the first time in her life. And, papa, she tells such a sad story about Errickdale. Will you please send them some money at once?"

"Not a penny," her father answered. "Not one penny of mine or yours shall they have. These people think to force me to their will by a strike! They shall learn what manner of master they have. Do they not know that Errick mines might lie idle a year, and I hold my head above water bravely? And do they dream there are no men willing and glad to be hired for the price they cavil at? Let them strike when they please. That is the only message John O'Rourke has to carry home with him for his pains, and all that you shall have either, Bridget. Take it and be gone."

"Oh! no, Bridget, not yet," Eleanora cried. "I am not ready. Papa, what can you be thinking of—sending her away when I am not ready to have her go? Let us consider for a minute, papa. She is so troubled"; and, indeed, Bridget's face was livid in its distress, and when she strove to speak her voice died away in a moan. "How much do the people want, papa?"

He laughed grimly. "I shall grant them nothing," he said. "However, since you are curious, they do not want as much as your ball will cost me, my love. How would you like to give that up for them?"

"My ball! Of course not. What a ridiculous idea! All Malton knows of it by this time, and twenty people are invited already, and I have sent for my dressmaker. Of course

I could not give that up for anything! But you were only jesting, papa dear. I know you could not mean it. Bridget, papa knows best, you may be sure. I never trouble my head about business. But I will tell you what you shall do. I am going to have a masqueball at Errickdale in January—such grand doings as were never known there before—and you shall come to it! You shall be where you can see the splendid court-dresses and the flowers and the feast, and hear the music—the very best music that Malton can furnish. So don't worry any more, Bridget, and you shall surely be there."

Bridget looked slowly round the room, full of warmth and light, and comfort and beauty. From the picture-frames haggard eyes seemed to stare at her; in the corners, and half hidden by the velvet hangings, figures wasted by want seemed to stretch their bony fingers towards her; through the canary's song and the splash of the scented fountain voices weak with fasting seemed to call on her for aid. But it had become impossible for her to utter another word in their behalf. A plan, a hope, flashed through her mind.

"Yes, Miss Eleanora," she said, "I will come to your ball." And waiting for no more words, she went away.

"She is worrying her life out," Eleanora said pityingly. "I don't believe she eats properly." And taking more trouble for a poor person than she had ever done before, she wrote to the housekeeper at Errickdale to send Bridget O'Rourke every day substantial and tempting food enough for an entire meal. Then she dismissed the whole matter; or rather the dressmaker was announced, and the important

question as to whether her balldress should be of velvet or satin drove all minor subjects, such as hunger and cold and nakedness, from her mind.

Meanwhile, Bridget strove to calm her father's wrath, which he poured forth volubly as the train carried them home; and when he was still, she thought out to its full scope the plan which had occurred to her. She would go to the ball, and, when the guests were assembled, she would step forth from her hiding-place, and stand before them all, and plead the people's cause. But the more she thought of it the more her heart misgave her. Why should she hope they would heed her then rather than to-day? Would not the master only be the more incensed against his miners, because of the shame to which he would be exposed? Yes, she felt sure that this would be the result. And then the long, long days and weeks which must elapse before the chance would come at all! How could she endure it? She put that sudden hope and plan away. Instead of it, she prayed again and again with smothered sobs: "O Christ! who for love of us died forus, save thy people now."

But she walked the long walk home from Teal station without fatigue, and came into Errickdale strong and well, to meet the woes she yearned to heal. The children had learned to understand her pity for them. They welcomed her return with cries for food; she gave them what she could, and lay down supperless herself that night torest. After that, each day brought her a full meal from the great house, but she never tasted of it; therewere those who needed it more, she said.

Once, on her way to a poor fam-

ily with a basket of these provisions, the smell of the well-cooked food produced such a violent craving that it seemed to her for a moment that she should go mad. With a great effort she controlled herself and stood still. "Christ," she prayed, "have mercy! Shall I eat dainties while the children starve?"

The craving did not cease, but strength to resist it came. She entered the wretched room to which she was bound, and fed the inmates who crowded around her; then she hurried home. In the cupboard were a few crusts and a bone already well picked. How sweetly they tasted! And while she feasted on them a woman crawled feebly in. "I've fasted long," she said, and quietly Bridget gave her all she had.

Twice afterward she felt that horrible craving, and then it ceased. Her father saw that she ate little, but never guessed how little it really was; he saw that she grew pinched and pale, but fancied it was grief alone that caused it. He did not know, and no one knew, that, with what Errickdale counted "plenty" at her command, Bridget was living like the poorest. The thirst for self-sacrifice, the thirst of a supernatural love, consumed her. "HE did it," she used to say to herself. "He was poor for us, and he died for us." From her room one by one her possessions departed; she carried them to those who, as she thought, needed them more, or she disposed of them for their use. Soon the attic room, which no one but herself ever entered, held literally nothing but the crucifix on the wall. Laying her weary limbs on the hard floor at night, she thought of the hard cross whereon her Lord had died. "Mine is an easier bed than his," she said, and smiled in the darkness. "May he make me worthier to share his blessed pains!"

But the nights were few that she spent on even so poor a couch as this. There was sickness in Errickdale as well as want, and Bridget was nurse, and doctor, and servant, and watcher beside the dead. And in her princess life at Malton Eleanora Rossetti counted the same long hours blithely, eager for her festival to come.

The 20th of January! overhead, and snow underfoot, and a biting frost to make Errickdale as merry as its heiress wished. Winter without, and want and woe perhaps; but who needed to think of that? In the old mansion summer itself was reigning. Orange and lemon trees mingled their golden fruits and spicy bloom in the corridors and halls and up and down the winding stairs. Lamps burned some faintly-scented oil, that filled the warm air with a subtle, delicious odor, and lamps and tall wax tapers flooded the room with golden but undazzling light. Fountains played among beds of rare ferns and exotics; and magnificent blossoms lay in reckless profusion upon the floor, to be trodden upon, and yield their perfume, and die unheed-And in doublet and hose and cap and plume, and all the gay festival gear of a king's court of mediæval times, hosts of servants waited upon Eleanora's word.

The winter twilight fell soon over Errickdale. In its gathering shadows John Rossetti was galloping home from Teal on his swiftest horse, when the creature shied suddenly, then stopped, trembling all over. A woman stood in the path, ghostly and strange to see through the gloom. Fearless John Rossetti started at the unexpected sight.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"Food," the woman answered, in a voice that thrilled him with inexplicable awe; from some far-off land it seemed to come—a land that knew nothing of ease and joy. "Your people die of want, and cold, and pain," it said. "In the name of God Almighty, and while you have time, hear me and help them."

Then this fearless John Rossetti sneered. "While I have time?" he said. "I have no time to-night, I warrant you. Choose better seasons than this for your begging,

Bridget O'Rourke."

He struck the spurs into his horse, but, though it quivered all over again, it would not move an inch. The woman lifted her hands to heaven. "God, my God! I have done all I can," she said. "I leave it now with thee." And so she vanished.

In Errick Hall Eleanora was speaking to a servant. "Make haste," she said. "I had almost forgotten it. Make haste and bring Bridget O'Rourke to me. I promised she should see it all."

The servant hurried obediently to John O'Rourke's cottage. Its owner was crouching sullenly over the fire. "Where's my girl?" he said. "Miss Eleanora wants her to see the sights? See 'em she shall, then. It's little she gets of brightness now, poor thing. Bridget! Bridget!"

But though he called loudly, no one answered. He climbed the stairs to the dark attic, and still no

reply.

"Give me the light, boy," he cried, with a dull foreboding at his heart, and he and the servant entered the room together.

She was not there. What was more, nothing was there—literally

nothing—except the cross of Him who gave his all, his very life, for men.

"I fear, I fear," this John said, trembling; and he took the crucifix down, and carried it with him for defence against invisible foes whom he dreaded far more than anything he could see.

"We will go look for her, O'Rourke," the servant said. "I must find her for Miss Eleanora, if not for her own sake."

In the kitchen supper was on the table, and the fire crackled on the hearth. Her loving father had been waiting long for her. Where was the child?

They asked the question at every tenement and every room. The people joined them in the search for her whom they all held dear. On the outskirts of the place, and where the road stretched out without another sign of habitation for five miles to Teal, was a lonely hovel.

"She's there," one woman said to another. "'Course she's there. Might 'a' known it. Jake Ireton's wife had twins yesterday, and it's little else they have. She's there, caring for 'em."

Yet they paused at the door, as if loath to open it. The whole throng seemed to feel that vague foreboding which John O'Rourke had felt; those who were able to crowd into the narrow room entered it timidly. What was it that they dreaded?

In the grand saloon of Errick mansion, decked like a regal ball-room, John Rossetti's daughter, attired gorgeously like the French queen in the famous painting which is Malton's pride, received her courtiers; and the band played the gay dance-music, and the light feet of the dancers glided over the floors.

In the poorest hut of Errickdale John O'Rourke's daughter received her courtiers, too, in regal state.

It was dark and silent there before the torches were brought in. By their flaring light the people saw the poor mother on a bed of rags and straw.

"Be still as ye can," she said softly. "Is't thee, O'Rourke? Thy good girl's been wi' me this four hours. One o'my babbies died, thank God! She laid it out there all decent."

And then, in the dim light, they saw the outline of a tiny form beside the bed, such being the roses and adornings of Bridget's court.

"She heard a horse go trampling by, and went to see 't," the woman said. "When she came back, says she: 'Twas master. I've pleaded my last plea for my people. My heart's broke.' Then t'other babby cried, and she took'tto still it, and she lay down wi' it, and, ever since, they've both been still, and I hope she's sleepit and forgot her woes awhile, God bless her!"

Sleeping on the hard floor, but she does not feel it. They bring the torches near her; she does not heed the glare, though the baby on her bosom starts and wakes and weeps. She does not hear it weep. In truth, this queen has forgotten her woes in a dreamless slumber, and truly God has blessed her; but with bitter wailing her courtiers kneel before her in the court of Death, the king.

There is food on the table which her own hands had placed there; there is fire on the hearth which her own hands kindled. She who lies there dead has not died of cold or hunger; she has died of a broken heart.

And the viol and flute and harp ring sweetly, and the trumpet and drum have a stately sound in Errick Hall, and youths and maidens dance and make merry. The great doors were flung open, and in long procession the guests passed into the banqueting-hall, where was room for every one to sit at the magnificent tables, and Eleanora was enthroned on a dais, queen of them all. Reproduced as in a living picture was a ball of Le Grand Monarque. "John Rossetti has surpassed himself," his guests said with admiring wonder. In a pause of the music Eleanora's silvery laugh was heard: she looked with pride at her father, and spoke aloud so that all might hear: "Yes, there never was such a father as mine. His birthday gift is beyond my highest expectations."

"Rossetti of Errickdale!"

From above their heads the strange voice came. Far up in the embrasure of a window a man with a lighted torch was standing. John O'Rourke's eyes met John Rossetti's, and commanded them, and held them fast.

"We mean no harm," he said.
"We come peaceable, if you meet us peaceable; but if not, there's danger and death all round ye. I warn ye fairly. Miss Eleanora bade my Bridget come to see her feast, and we've come to bring her. Ye'd best sit quiet, all of ye, for we've fire to back us." And he held his torch dangerously near to the curtains. Errickdale hall and Errickdale master were in his power.

Coming through the hall they heard it—the steady, onward tramp of an orderly and determined crowd; the notes of a weird Irish dirge heralded their coming. Two and two the courtiers of Bridget O'Rourke marched in.

Men in rags, their lips close-shut and grim, a rude and flaring torch borne in each man's hand; haggard women with wolfish eyes and scantly clad, leading or carrying children who are wailing loudly or moaning in a way that chills the blood to hear, while the women shrilly sing that dirge for a departed soul—would the terrible procession never cease? Blows and clamor would be easier to bear than this long-drawn horror, as two and two the people filed around the loaded tables and gayly-attired guests.

Rising in amazement at the first entrance of these new-comers, throughout their coming Eleanora stood upright, one hand pressed upon her heart, as if to quell its rapid beating. Beautiful, and queenly despite her pallid cheeks, she stood there, yet two and two the people passed slowly up the hall, and slowly passed before her dais, and made no sign of homage. It was another queen who held them in her sway.

Was it over at last?—for the procession that seemed to have no end ceased to file through the lofty doors. The men stood back against the wall, still with their lips closeshut and grim; they lowered their torches as banners are lowered to greet a funeral train. The women flung up their lean, uncovered arms, and shrieked out one more wail of bitter lamentation, then stood silent The very babes were still. And all eyes were fixed upon the door-all except John O'Rourke's, that never stirred from John Rossetti's face.

Borne in state, though that state was but a board draped with a ragged sheet—her face uncovered to those stars and to that biting frost, her feet bare to those snows for which Eleanora wished; the face marked by a suffering which was far deeper than any that mere cold or hunger causes, yet sealed by it

to an uplifted look which was beyond all earthly loveliness; the hands crossed on a heart that ached no longer, over the crucifix which was this queen's only treasure—so Bridget O'Rourke had come to Eleanora's feast.

And so they bore her up the hall; and before the regal dais this more regal bier stood still.

Then at last Eleanora moved, and started, and stretched out her hands. "What do you want of me?" she said. "What is it that you want of me? Speak to me, Bridget O'Rourke. Speak to me."

They were face to face again in their youth and beauty, but the contrast between them now brought no delight. They were face to face again; but let this heiress command as she might or beg as she might, never again would the rich voice speak to her with passionate pleading, or the grave eyes meet her own with a stronger prayer than words. This Queen of Death made no answer to her royal sister, except the awful answer of that silence which no power of earth can break.

"Rossetti of Errickdale!"

Once again from far above their heads they heard him calling—the man whose earthly all lay dead before them.

"We threatened to strike for food, and we feared ye. We suffered sore like slaves, for we feared ye. It's ye that may fear us now, I tell ye, for to-night we strike for a life. Give us my good girl's life again—my good girl's life."

He was wild with grief, and the people were wild with want and grief. Echoing up to the arches, their shout rang loud and long. "We strike for a life," they cried. "Give us back that life, or we burn ye all together"

Owner of princely wealth was he

upon whom they called. Seven hours ago that life was in his gift—one act of pity might have saved it, one doled-out pittance kept the heart from breaking. Let him lavish his millions upon her now; he cannot make her lift a finger or draw a breath.

"John O'Rourke!"

It was not the master's voice that answered. For the first time John O'Rourke's eyes turned from the master and looked upon Eleanora. The queen of a night held out her hands again to her who had gone to claim the crown of endless ages.

"John O'Rourke," she said, gently and slowly, so that each word carried weight, "what is it that Bridget wants of me? What would she ask if she could speak to me to-night? I will give her whatever she would ask. Does she want her

life back again?"

The unexpected question, the gentle words, struck home. Suddenly O'Rourke's defiant eyes grew dim; and through his tears he saw his good girl's face, with the deep lines of suffering plain upon it, and the new and restful look of perfect peace. It pleaded with him as no words could plead.

"Miss Eleanora," he cried, "I wouldn't have her back. Not for all the world I wouldn't call her back. She's been through sore anguish, and I thank God it's over. Give us food and fair wages, miss—that's all she would ask of ye."

He paused, and in the pause none dreamed how wild a fight the man was fighting with his wrath and hatred. But still that worn and silent form pleaded with him and would not be gainsaid. At length he spoke, huskily: "And she would ask of us, miss, not to harm one of ye, but to let master and all go free for the love of God. Shall we do what Bridget would ask of us, my men?"

His strained voice faltered, he burst into loud Irish weeping—a lonely father's weeping, touching to hear in its patient resignation.

"Yes! yes!" the men and women answered him; and in the hall rich and poor wept and laughed together, for the great strike of Errickdale was over, and peace was made, and want supplied. But through the tumult of sorrow and rejoicing she alone lay utterly unmoved and silent who had won life at the price of life.

The story is often told in Malton of a young girl, very beautiful and much beloved, who renounced the world on the night of her eighteenth birthday, in the very midst of a feast of unequalled splendor, and at the threshold of a future full of brilliant promise. They say she dwelt in lonely Errickdale, among the poor and ignorant, and lived like them and for them. And now and then they add that, when once some one ventured to ask her why she chose so strange a life, she answered that she had seen death at her feast in the midst of pomp and splendor, and had learned, once for all, their worth. But when she was further asked if she could not be willing, like many others present at that feast, to care for the poor and to give to them, and yet have joy and comfort too, the fire of a divine love kindled in her eyes, and she answered that she counted it comfort and joy to live for the people for whom she had seen another content and glad to die

THE DOOM OF THE BELL.

Two men were sitting in a garret at the very top of one of the craziest old houses in Bruges--not a house dating from the fifteenth century, such as those we admire to this day, but a house that was already two hundred years old when those were built. It stood on the brink of the canal beyond which are now the public gardens that have displaced the ramparts of the once turbulent and independent city. Then the houses crowded into the wide fosse of not too fragrant water, and leaned their balconied gables over it. This was not in the busy or the splendid quarter; it was far from the cathedral and the Guildhall. And in those prosperous times of the Hanseatic League, of the Venetian and Genoese merchant-princes visiting and marrying among their full peers of the city of Bruges-the times of the grand palaces built by those royal and learned tradersthese two men I speak of were poor, obscure, and with little prospect of ever being anything else. Yet one of them had it in him to do as great things as the Van Eycks, and to take the art-loving city by storm, if he could only get "a chance." It was the same in the year 1425 as it is now, and men in picturesque short-hose and flat caps were marvellously like those we see in ugly chimney-pots and tight trousers. The rivalry of other artists none very eminent-and the ungetable patronage of rich men stood in this young painter's way, and he got disheartened and disgusted. This garret was his studio, his bedroom, and his kitchen. It was cheap, and the light could be managed easily

and properly to suit his painting; but it was not one of those elaborately artistic studios, a picture in itself, which we associate with the idea of the "old masters." The things that were there had evidently drifted there and got heaped up by accident-homely things most of them, and disposed with the carelessness natural to a man who had little belief or hope in his future. There was an air about the whole place as well as its owner that seemed to say as plainly as any words, "What is the use?" But the other man was a contrast to him. He was much older; a wiry form, and eager, small eyes, and an air of re sistance to outward circumstances, "as if he could not help it," but not in the sense of what is popularly called an "iron will," were his chief distinguishing marks. was neither artist nor merchant, and he lived "by his wits." In those days, just the same as now. that meant something bordering on dishonesty; and such men were known as useful, but scarcely reputable. This individual was seated on a low trunk or chest of polished wood, but not carved, nor even adorned with curious hinges or iron-work; the other stood opposite, leaning on the high sill of a window in the gable, looking down into the canal.

"Peter," said the latter after a pause, "have you heard of any one dying lately in the great houses, or, for that matter, in the rookeries?"

"No, not dying—at least, not lately," said the other slowly.

"Not dying?" said the first, laying the same emphasis on the word as

his friend had done, and not showing any lack of understanding or

sign of surprise.

"Well, I mean she recovered; but she was pretty near death, and of course will be again as soon as it is safe. It put some of his lordship's plans out a little when he heard how badly Simon had done his work. But you know it was not at his house, but in a kind of prison, and she was put there on a charge of stealing her mistress' Genoese pearlembroidered robe, and it was said the lady begged as a favor she might not be publicly executed for the attempt, but allowed some time to repent and prepare; and when she was ready, she was to be told that one day, within the week, she would be poisoned by something in her food, which she could not taste and which would give her no pain, but put her to sleep-for ever. But no one believed that this was her mistress' request, nor that she ever stole anything, of course. Every one knows that poor Dame Margaret is a cipher in her husband's house—a worse victim of my Lord Conrad's than any one there, many as they are; and he is just now out of reach of punishment, being, by the Count of Flanders' influence, a member of the government, a councillor, and I know not what besides. But it seems Simon did not do his work aright, and the poor girl is still there, and no doubt, in a week or two, the experiment will be quietly tried again and with success. Jan, are you listening?"

"Yes," said the artist as he turned round with absent look and a gesture, as if he had unconsciously been picking off some buttons from his sleeve and dropping them in the canal below.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"Peter," said the other abruptly, "is Simon your friend?"

"Well, we have had dealings together sometimes. He sells me clothes now and then; you know he has a good deal of such stuff on his hands."

"If I could pay him," said the artist bitterly, "I should not need any go-between; but I have nothing. I want something he could give me, and, if I had it, I should not need any patron, and would take none, short of the Count of Flanders himself."

"Riddles again," said Peter quietly; "poverty makes you mysterious."

"I'll tell you plainly what the riddle is, if you'll help me."

"For friendship's sake?"

"Oh! no, indeed. Is there one in all Bruges would do it, or I expect it of him?"

"Well, well, do not croak; but you know by experience that it is hard to live."

"If you will get me what I want of Simon, you shall have one-fourth of my future reward and Simon one-fourth."

"Too mean terms, those, Jan," said Peter quietly, but intently

watching his friend's face.

"Very well, each a third, then; I knew you would want no less. But, look you," he added, brightening up, "no one can share the fame, and I shall be known all over Flanders and Brabant, and France—ay, even Italy and Germany; and who knows if the Greek merchants will not carry my name to the court of Constantinople itself?—and you two poor wretches will have nothing but a pitiful handful of gold."

"Quite enough for me, at any rate," said Peter composedly; "it will be more than I ever had before. But do not let us 'count our

chickens before they are hatched.' What is it, though, that you want to work this miracle with?"

"Only a vial of her blood after the girl has been dead four hours."

Peter betrayed no emotion.

"Rather an unusual request," he said meditatively, "and one that savors strongly of witchcraft, which you know is scarcely less dangerous than heresy. You remember what happened at Constance scarcely more than ten years ago?"

"Nonsense! What has heresy to do with the mixing of my colors? And who but a leech will find out the mixture? And after all, if a fool were to use this potion just mixed as I shall mix it, and paint a picture with it, his picture would be only fit for a tavern-sign, and no one could tell the difference. If you need the ingredients, you need the skill more."

"Why, Jan, you are getting enthusiastic—a miracle, that, in itself. I thought you had made up your mind that you would never do anything that would get known."

"Well, I have a feeling, since you mentioned this case, that I shall be known before I die, and known by this means too. Can you get me what I want?"

"I dare say I can. But shall I tell the old sinner Simon that I want it for you, or say it is for a leech?"

"Why lie about it?" said the young man fiercely.

"Prudence, you know," said the other, perfectly unabashed.

"No; tell him the bare truth, but swear him to secrecy. If he tells it, he shall forfeit his share."

"He could get twice as much for

denouncing you."

"Let him! Where is his interest to denounce me? He is not a fiend, and he knows it is hard to live."

"He did, but may be he has forgotten it in his present position. All the grandees know him now."

"But you forget, Peter, that his own business is more dangerous than my undertaking could be, even taking it for granted I should be suspected of witchcraft, and he would scarcely like to draw attention on his own delicate doings."

"So far true," said Peter. "I respect your shrewdness; you can talk sense sometimes. I will get that vial for you some time this

week or next."

"Do not forget the exact time after death—four hours. The perfection of the mixture would be gone if you did not attend to that. I shall come with you to the door and wait for you and the vial, any night and any hour you mention."

"Very well," said Peter, as he got up and stretched himself. "I sup-

pose your larder is empty?"

"Oh! I forgot. You can have what there is-cheese three days old, and some fresh brown bread. and two eggs, new-laid yesterday morning, which my friend the washerwoman gave me for sitting up at night with her sick boy. She would make me take them, and I am glad now I need not eat them myself. I should feel mean, if I did; and yet, if they stayed there till to-morrow, hunger would drive me to it. You are welcome to them."

Meanwhile, Peter had silently helped himself to all the articles mentioned except one "hunch" of bread, and left the garret with a cool "Thank you." Jan turned back to the window, and stayed nearly an hour looking down into the drowsy canal with its fringe of dark, huddled houses, each, as he thought, a frame for a picture full of the same agony of hopeless aspirations and submission to grim

and sordid circumstances as his own. But he saw through glasses of his own staining; for many of those wretched, crazy, but beautiful houses held pictures of a bright home life and love that looked no higher or farther for happiness, and was, in truth, the outcome of a mind more philosophical than the future glory of Flemish art, staring into the flood from his garret window, could boast of possessing.

Three months went by, and no one saw the young artist, save the man who sold him his meagre provisions, Peter, and his friend of the eggs. Five days after the conversation we have recorded Peter and he were walking home at two o'clock in the morning through the streets, where no one but the watchman had leave and license to be, calling out the hour when the chimes struck it. It was bright moonlight, and the two men would gladly have dispensed with the beauty of the night, much as it enhanced the charm of the great mansions they passed, the carved doorways, the delicate balconies, the ponderous, magnificent iron bell-pulls, the lions' and griffins' heads on the many bridges over the narrow canals. Even Jan passed hurriedly by, standing nervously back in a doorway if he heard the clear cry of a watchman, starting as a loose stone rattled under his feet in the pavement, and even when his companion illnaturedly put his hand in a fountain and noisily disturbed the water with a "swish" that made the other turn pale and look around in horror of being pursued.

As the weeks went by and the young man worked on alone, feverishly and battling with his own superstitions as well as the fear of being denounced by his two associates, an odd change came over

him. Peter noticed it about one month after the day they had procured the vial of blood. Jan was taken with a pious fit that day, and insisted on spending some miserable pence he had on candles offered for the soul of the poisoned girl, and which he, with genuine devoutness, put on the iron spikes provided for the purpose in the church of Notre Dame. That day, having spent all in this way, he fasted altogether and nearly fainted at his easel; but when he left off work Peter saw that a startled, expectant look was in his eyes, which he directed furtively every now and then to one particular corner of his room. When questioned he hurriedly turned the conversation; but the scared look grew more and more intense as time went on. At last, one night, the young man asked Peter seriously and with great trepidation to stay and sleep with him.

"I believe I am getting nervous," he said, with a laugh that was anything but genuine. Peter made no objection, but in the middle of the night he was awakened by Jan. The poor fellow was in a violent cold perspiration, and, pointing excitedly to the same corner, cried;

"There she is; and she never says a word, but only looks at me reproachfully! She has been there every night since the first Month's Mind!"

"Pshaw!" said Peter, "I see nothing there, Jan; you should be bled—that is all. You have been overworking yourself."

But nothing would persuade the artist that the ghost of the poisoned girl was not there, silent and reproachful; and there, day after day and night after night, he saw her, and, though he longed to speak to her, he never dared.

Three months were over and his

picture was done; but he was only the skeleton of his former self, and he looked, as Peter said, like what the Florentine woman had said of Dante-"the man who had gone down to hell and come back again." His bitterness was gone, so was his hopelessness, but there was no healthy joy or youthful enthusiasm in their place; he seemed to have grown old all at once, except for the feverish, eager haste to show his picture and win the name that should darken that of the national pets and the popular favorites. Where to show it? was a question Peter put more than once, but Jan waived it as not worth any anxiety. He should write a notice, and post it on the church doors and those of the Guildhall and the Exchange, to the effect that a new and unknown painter had a picture for sale and exhibition at such and such a place; and if the public did not care to come there to see it, they might see it once on next market-day in the Grande Place, where the artist would show it himself, free to all.

The subject was "Judith and Holofernes"—a common subject enough in those days, but the artist thought that no one had ever treated it in the same way before. When we see it in the market-place and hear the comments of the people, we shall understand in what lay the difference.

The day appointed by the artist came. All the rich and learned men had noticed the placard on the church doors, and the connoisseurs and critics were on the alert. This unpatroned and self-confident painter stung their curiosity, and the merchants, native and foreign, were also eager to see and, if they liked it, "buy up" the new sensation. The people, too, had heard of the exhibition, and many crowd-

ed earlier than usual to the marketplace to get a glimpse of the mysterious picture being set up by the artist.

No one did see it, however. A good many stalls, booths, and awnings were up long before daylight, and no one noticed the stand of the new-comer, put up in a corner, and screened all round with the commonest tent-cloth. As soon as dawn made it possible to see things a little, the stand was found to be open, and a picture, unframed, was seen set up on trestles, and some coarse crimson drapery skilfully arranged round it, so as to take the place of the frame which the artist was too poor to buy. A few loungers came up, and, fancying this was the screen to some mystery-play to be acted later in the day, sauntered away again, like uncritical creatures as they were. Presently a priest and a merchant came up, evidently searching for some particular booth, and soon stopped before the pic-

"Here it is," shortly said one of them.

"So that is the picture?" said the other; and for a while they both stood in silence, examining it in detail.

"Wonderful!" said the merchant presently. "It beats the hospital 'St. John."

"There is a strange power about the drawing," said the other.

"But the coloring!" retorted the merchant. "See the depth, the life-likeness, the intensity; and yet there is nothing violent or merely sense-appealing. It is horror, but rather mental than physical horror."

"True," said the priest. "I wonder if he had a model."

"Most likely, but there is more than he ever saw in any common model; the merit rests with himself alone, I should judge."

"Well, do you think of buying

"I am inclined to do so, but want to examine it more closely first. Besides, I see no one here to represent the painter, or even guard the picture."

"Oh! I have no doubt there is some one hovering about—perhaps that countryman who looks so vacant. You know the professional tricks of our worthy artists!"

And with this he called the person in question, who surely looked vacant enough to be in disguise.

"Can you tell me what you think of this picture, friend?" he asked.

"Very fine, messire."

"You do not think it like one of Hendrick Corlaens, do you?"

"I never saw that, messire," bashfully said the countryman.

"But you think this is fine?"

"Very, very."

"Why do you like it?"

"It seems like life."
"Like death too?"

"Yes, messire."

"How far did you come this morning?" asked the merchant, fancying his companion's shrewdness had overshot the mark this time.

"Forty-three miles. I started before midnight from Stundsen."

"I think," said the merchant to his brother-critic, "we shall make nothing of this man. He must be one of my brother-in-law's men at Stundsen. He is quite genuine in his stupidity."

And the pair moved nearer the picture, while others came up and stopped, till there was soon a little knot of admirers talking in whispers. The crowd grew as the day went on. In the side street lead-

ing into the Place the doors of Notre Dame opened to let out the flood of worshippers that had flowed in since dawn from the country. and who now rushed from their devotions to their business. Noise was uppermost, trade was brisk; the sun got hot and men got thirsty. It was soon a riotous as well as a picturesque scene, and a spectator on that balcony of the curiously-carved corner window on the same side of the Place as the Guildhall could scarcely have told which stalls the hurrying masses most besieged, so tangled was the web of human beings jostling and jolting each other along the uneven pavement. A good many had stared and gazed at the picture. It was the subject of many comments and disputes that day; men quarrelled over its merits as they drank their sour wine, and women talked of it in whispers over their bargains. Some children had screamed and kicked at first sight of it; altogether it had not failed to be known, seen, and talked about. Our two friends of early morning had hung about it all day and overheard most of the remarks of the crowd. Some people had been disappointed in finding that it was not the sign of a play representing the slaving of Holofernes, but only a picture; a Venetian and a Greek, daintily dressed and speaking some soft, foreign tongue-a wonder to the sturdy Flemish peasants from the dykes and canals by the sea-lounged near the unpainted railing that protected the picture from the crowd. No one could see behind the picture, but many thought the artist was hidden within the closely sewn curtains, that never flapped in the breeze like the rest of the market awnings. These two and the first critics listened in eager silence

to the judgment of the crowd, put forth in short sentences at long in-On coming up one wotervals. man said to her companion:

"Why, I thought they always painted Judith with black hair; this one has hair the color of

mine."

"Perhaps it was his betrothed he painted," said the other, "and in compliment to her he made it a portrait."

"Then I should not like to be he. A ghostly bride he would

have."

"But look at her eyes; they seem like a corpse's just come back to life."

"Pshaw! how could a corpse come back to life? You mean a ghost."

"No-Lazarus, you know. I can fancy how frightened and reproachful he might have looked when he woke up and found himself in his shroud."

"I think he would look glad and thankful. But come away. It seems as if I should dream of that face."

"Yes: it makes me feel very strange the more I look at it."

And the two women moved off. Presently another voice was heard in a muffled tone.

"See the blood in Holofernes' It looks as if it were movthroat. ing."

"Judith looks too weak and small

to kill him," said another.

"So she does," said a third, and he added, in a lower tone: "I once had a cousin very like that picture."

"Is she dead?" asked a woman, a stranger to the speaker.

"Yes," said the man, with some

surprise.

"I thought no live person could remind you of this face," answered the woman, as if in explanation.

The two couples of critics glanced

appreciatively and with a smile at each other, and the Greek said to his friend:

"Your boors are no bad critics, after all. I think the barbarians rather beat us in painting."

"Beat you!" laughed the Venetian. "Speak for yourself. But it is your religion that has fossilized your art; otherwise you would have

"No," said the other thoughtfully, "I think you mistake: I doubt if we have the gift you, and the Flemings also, have for painting. Our literature is as far above that of this northern people as heaven is above the earth, and our sculpture, of course, is unrivalled; but they have the gift of music, and of architecture, and of paintingthe two last marvellously developed. And in the first I think your people—I do not mean Venetians, but some of your other Italian neighbors—have just now reached a good climax. At Milan I heard some chanting that would put us to shame, and even here I have heard something not unlike it. Yes, I cede the palm to the barbarians in the arts of Euterpe and-"

"But in architecture yours is the peer of any northern style," said the Venetian.

"I doubt it," said the Greek. "There is a strange impression comes over me in these vast, skyhigh, delicately-carved cathedrals, dim and resonant, that comes nowhere else-not in our gold-colored, mosaic-paved, dome-crowned churches, nor your St. Mark, the daughter of our St. Sophia."

"Every one knows how liberal are your views," said the other, with

a smile.

"Yes?" asked the Greek, evidently in innocence. "But I am only fair to others. I would rather be a Greek than a barbarian, as the adage of one of our old heathen philosophers has it; but I can see that God has not rained every blessing on one spot, and that my native land, as he did on the Garden of Eden before Adam fell."

"Hush!" said the Venetian, interrupting him. "Some girl has fainted."

Some little stir was taking place in the crowd; it was a girl who had fainted, and an old woman, strong and powerful, was holding her.

Among the many questions tossed to and fro and never answered, our four friends all managed to hear the words of the old woman to her nearest neighbors.

"Yes, that is the portrait of her sister and my granddaughter, just as if the poor lost girl had sat for it herself. But then this must have been painted since she lost her rosy color. And I believe the painter knows what became of her, and where she is, if she is alive; and, God forgive me! I always accused the Lord Conrad of Schön of her ruin and disappearance. I will know, too, if this painter is to be found anywhere in Flanders. Oh! yes, Agnes is very well; she will be herself again directly, nervous little thing!" And the old woman, with a kind of savage tenderness, shielded the face of her granddaughter in her bosom, while the girl slowly revived.

Some people hinted that the painter was hidden in the closed tent behind the picture, and others brought out shears to cut the curtains; but the priest here interposed.

"I think, my friends," he said in a clear, authoritative voice, "that you had better leave this matter to the proper authorities. Messire Van Simler and I will see that this

good woman is heard, and, if need be, helped to find her granddaughter, or any news of her death and fate. It would be an unwarrantable act to cut these curtains open: if there is no one there, you will feel like fools, the dupes of the childish trick of an unknown painter; if you find the person you are looking for, you may do him a mischief and come vourselves under the eve of the law. I advise you to let the matter rest. And you, my good friend, here is an address you may find useful whenever you wish to make further inquiries. It would be best to take your charge home."

The manner rather than the words of the speaker took effect at once, and the group dissolved to make room for other sight-seers, all gaping, all admiring, and all ending by feeling uncomfortable and leaving the stand with muttered words of equal wonder and fear. But it is impossible to follow each comment, and we have yet other scenes to look at before we close the history of this picture.

Among the crowd that day had been Peter and Simon, and the former, familiar as he was with the painting, had ceased to feel impressed by the weird, indescribable beauty and awe that were its verv essence. But he had been, in a business-like way, alive to everything connected with what was to him the instrument of future success, and the fainting scene and its close were especially observed. He noticed the drift of all the remarks made on the picture; he had foretold it himself-for he was nothing if not worldly-wise-and he carefully scanned the faces of the four critics who had so pertinaciously lingered round the stand all day. He knew them all for enlightened men, above the nonsense of the age, good art-critics, and men born to be masters of their kind. Even the young Venetian had the making of a statesman in him; the Greek was as simple-minded as he was generous, and, though his countrymen had a bad name at Bruges for conventional sins of which not half of them were really guilty, he was, even with the most ignorant, a signal exception. The other two were trusted native citizens, bosom friends, patrons of all that was good. learned, and improving, and, what was more, powerful in the council and civic government. The first, by the way, was a canon of the cathedral, by private inheritance a rich man, and, by dint of charity to the starving and liberality to men of letters, raised above the scandal that attended on rich ecclesiastics. These four were representative men, and though each a representative of the best type of his own class and nation, still no less entitled to be called representative men.

Peter noted the way Messire Van Simler went that evening; the canon he knew well by reputation. Then he came back to the Place and helped a young peasant to lift and pack the picture, leaving on the planks in front of the booth the address of the artist and a notice that purchasers were asked to meet the painter at his own studio any time each day before dark. The peasant seemed slim and tall for a Flemish countryman, but his cap concealed his face, and his loose vest was well calculated to increase his seeming bulk; still, when he got to the studio in the old garret over the canal, and threw off his cap, he proved to be the person you must have suspected-the painter himself. He said nothing, and Peter did not offer to speak; but the former, as soon as he came in, glanced hurriedly into one

corner and then back at the picture. Over their scanty supper the two exchanged a few monosyllables as to the result of the show, but each was uneasy and spoke as if compelled by the suspicion of the suspicion of the other. Next morning Peter went to Van Simler's house before the latter was out of bed, and was received during the merchant's ample breakfast. No one came to Jan's garret the first day, and he stayed at home alone with his work, now and then retouching it, as if drawn to it by a spell he could not master; but each time he worked at it he seemed more ill and nervous. Towards dusk he heard a footstep on the stair, and opened the door to let in some light on the break-neck place, full of corners and broken steps, where some stranger was evidently groping his way. It was the Greek. He greeted the painter with grave earnestness and more interest than is usual with a purchaser.

"I have come," he said after the first civilities, "to buy both your pictures and you, and pack both at once, as my ships will be in port by the night after to-morrow night, and it needs time to meet them. They cannot wait—at least, that one cannot which happens to be most convenient for you to go in. Have you any objection to go with me to Greece?—any tie to detain you here?"

Jan looked into the corner before he answered, and shuddered. "I fear I have," he said unwillingly. The Greek looked fixedly at him.

"I will not keep you any longer than you like, and you probably like travelling? There are scenes in Greece and the East that will delight you, if you have a liking for Scriptural subjects; and the journey need not be longer than the interval between this cargo from here and the next cargo back."

Jan said nothing.

"You see I am bent on having you as well as your picture," the merchant went on; "but if you insist on refusing me your company, I will take the picture at once. I have men below ready to carry it away, and I will give you your own price at once, in gold coin."

And Jan still gazed into the furthest—and empty—corner.

"I have reasons for my haste," said the Greek, slowly, at last.

Jan turned inquiringly.

"Good reasons," said his visitor gravely and gently, "which I will tell you when we are at sea, if you will trust me till then; if not, I will even tell you now, though the proverb says that 'walls have ears.'"

Jan seemed to need no immediate explanation, but said:

"Take the picture, and welcome, and believe in my gratitude, though I cannot put it into words; but I can take no gold for the picture."

"Why, you invited purchasers

to come here to you!"

"I have learned to-day that I cannot sell it."

"Well," said the Greek, with a look of intelligence, "I think you and I understand each other, then, and I may as well take you and the

picture too."

"No," said Jan, "you do not understand me, but I understand you and am grateful. If I am in danger, it matters little; I prefer meeting such a danger as you fear for me to seeing what I should see always, on the ship, in the East, as well as here—or at the stake."

"Your mind is—preoccupied, my young friend," said the merchant. "But let me take the picture; at least, it is better to have the evi-

dence put out of the way in time.

Let me call to my men."

"Yes, but no gold for it," said Jan without emotion, as he pushed away the purse on the table. "Take the picture; there will be only one face then, and I shall not be torturing myself as to whether the likeness is faithful enough or not."

The Greek bent out of the window and whistled to two men sitting on the narrow stone-work of the canal; one of them struck a flint, lit a pine torch, and, beckoning the other to follow him, came up the winding stairs. Jan said not a word, and the picture was packed and carried away, while the merchant lingered yet, pressing gold, protection, and future patronage upon the benumbed artist. Even the hint of fame could not stir the young man.

"I have done my life's work," he said gloomily. "I shall never paint the equal of that picture again, and I do not wish to," he added with a shudder; "and for the sake of my reputation I must not paint anything below that standard."

"But why should not you do even better?" said the Greek.

"I thought you knew," said the young man, in puzzled uncertainty.

"I know nothing, and my suspicions are too vague to shape my judgment on the merits of this particular work of yours. I gathered all I do know, or even suspect, from the remarks of the people to-day. I am used to watching indications of men's fancies, prejudices, passions, say even superstitions, and I thought it a pity that such people as we heard to-day should have it in their power to end or mar the career of an artist of your genius. We want some young, rising painter—one who can rival the Italians;

one who can show that there is a future for art, that it is progressive and improvable; one especially who will defy conventionalities—for I own that your independent treatment of a 'Judith' fascinated me. But if I cannot prevail upon you to accept my services at present, you will not refuse to take this address; it will find me, no matter where I may be, and it will be even a personal safeguard for you in my absence and during the interval that may elapse before I hear of your appeal."

"Thank you a thousand times for your unprovoked and generous interest!" said Jan more warmly than he had spoken before. "I shall never forget it. God grant my life or death may be guided and determined by the highest Power! I should not trust myself to decide wisely, if I had the choice offered me; but if it is ordained that I should live long, I prefer your being the instrument of my salvation."

The merchant left, and Jan stayed alone all night; he was stonily calm, watching, thinking, waiting as if for an expected event, and never breaking his fast through the long, dark hours. When early morning came, two men in gray cloaks opened his door and respectfully ordered him to come with them to Van Simler's house, which he did without surprise and without remonstrance. Here he found the canon, who with Van Simler told him briefly that they thought it for his good to be taken into the country to the castle of Stundsen, belonging to the merchant's brother-in-law. They did not tell him why, and it did not even occur to him to ask. passed from the large dining-hall where this short interview took place to a room furnished with Spanish leather and carved oakhis room, he was told, for a few hours—he thought he recognized the Greek anxiously and quickly open a door that led to the passage, as if to assure himself of the presence of some expected person.

Van Simler and his friend, meanwhile, had a short and significant talk, a few words of which are here set down to explain facts that may look to the undiscerning reader like the conventional tricks of modern mediævalists, to whom plots and kidnapping are "daily brêad." "Now," said the merchant, "if that scoundrel Peter goes no further, there is every hope of getting this obstinate young genius out of the city in safety; but he may try to get two prices and hint the matter to Conrad Schön."

The canon shrugged his shoulders. "Of course, in that case," he said, "all would be in vain, for Count Conrad has the sovereign's ear; and you know the hobby the Count of Flanders has lately bestridden."

"The youth ought to have gone with the Greek; but the latter says he believes him half-mad, which accounts for his staying in the jaws of the lion."

"I have heard of Jan the painter before," said the priest, "and, had he been a different person, I should have gone to him myself; but, from my general knowledge of his character, any one would do better than one of us, and I am glad the Greek forestalled me. Why did not you keep Peter under lock and key when he came here?"

"It was a mistake, I own," said the other; "but still, if I had, there was Simon in the secret."

"Simon is a fool, and nothing of this would have occurred to him."

"I doubt about his being a fool; at any rate, he is a dangerous one.

"He is a fool in such matters as these, though dangerous enough in his way, as you say. Now, our Greek friend has just left the house, I see, and there is nothing to detain me here just now. You take the transport business in your hands? Well and good; while I attend to any foolish charge made in the city. I expect I shall see old Mother Colette before dark tonight."

There is no need to go through the details of the few days that followed. In one word, Peter was more powerful than Jan's four protectors put together, but only because he had Conrad Schön at his back, and behind him a greater "presence" yet-no less a person than the Count of Flanders, who had lately taken a mania about witchcraft. It was easy to play upon his vanity and tickle his supposed superior sense of discovery, and Conrad had reasons for diverting to the young artist the opprobrium which even he, with all his power, could not fail to have brought upon himself in such an independent and proud burgher-city as Bruges for the wrong done to the orphan daughter of one of her citizens and an attendant of his wife: for there was still a lingering in Flanders of the old knightly feeling of the earlier days of chivalry, which made it the duty of a knight to consider every housemaiden within his walls as his own daughter or sister, and protect, and even defend, her as such.

The dark accusations of Conrad and his informant against the defenceless painter were but too readily listened to, and, before his friends could conceal him, the sovereign had already sent to demand his person. We will pass over the mock examination which the count

held, more with a view to satisfy his own curiosity than to assure himself of the prisoner's guilt; over the honest but bitter malignity with which old Mother Colette, an unconscious tool sought out by Jan's enemies, testified against the man who, to make such a startling and mysterious likeness of her lost granddaughter, must have been intimately acquainted with her; and, lastly, over Jan's strange apathy and silence, his refusal to deny the charges brought against him, and his seeming relief at being condemned to die.

He never told any one the reason of all this, and the secret would have died with him, if Peter, years afterwards, when the picture again came to light and became famous. had not made known the hallucination of the painter, to which was really due the success others had stupidly attributed to forbidden practices. The last thing that concerns us is the strange sentence and fanciful doom pronounced by the Count of Flanders, the carrying out of which will take us up into the belfry of the Guildhall, just above the market-place where the unlucky picture had first roused the ignorant suspicions of the mob.

Here, where swings the largest bell of the famous carillon, we find the artist once more. The great dark mass hangs dumb beside him; very little light is here, but enough to see by dimly, and make out some of the maze of beams and iron-braced stays that uphold the old bell. Even some of the inscription is visible; its gilt letters in relief gleam out of the dimness and naturally fix the eye in that kind of magnetic gaze which some say is favorable to sleep. Jan was half crouched in one corner, wondering why he was there and how long it was

intended he should stay; the two men who had brought him had simply told him that the count had sent him up there to see if he could rival the penance of St. Simeon Stylites, for a few hours at least. Presently the bell began to stir and sway softly, slowly; one dull, muffled tone came out as the tongue touched the outbent lips of the mighty bell; the next stroke came louder, the next swing was wider, and Jan's head already throbbed with the unwelcome noise. Now the monster was alive in earnest. Warming to its work, it swung further and further: it tossed its base upwards. till the beams groaned and creaked, and all kinds of hideous minor noises seemed to be embroidered on the constant dull echo between each stroke. A strange wind blew in Jan's face; it was the breath of the bell, whose relentless beat grew more and more regular, more and more monotonous, as it went on. The artist dared not move; one hair's breadth nearer the terrific engine would be his death, one blow of its lips would be more effectual than any stroke of axe or pile of faggots. He shrank close to the wall, but, as his body just cleared the bell in its mad flingings and tossings, his mind seemed to be struck by it at every toll, almost absorbed in it, drawn to it with fatal curiosity. Was that the bell whose sound had been so majestic, so solemn, so beautiful in his ears as a child, so grand when it rang out above the otherseighty of them-that chimed on the great church holidays and welcomed the victorious sovereign when he came back from war? Was this the heart of the great angel that poetry and popular belief had endowed the belfry with-this terrible, maddening brazen-tongued,

relentless engine? It only just missed touching him each time it flung itself on his side of the beamchamber; if it were to swing only a little more fiercely, as it seemed easy for it to do, one blow would crush him. Already the air seemed to suck him in under the bell, into some dark vault, no doubt-some bottomless pit; had his conductors known, when they put him there, that it was time for the bell to toll, or had they forgotten him? How long would this go on? His brain could not stand it much longer, he felt, but to scream was useless; the great, dread voice hushed all other sound. It seemed presently as if the gilt lettering got brighter; it took the shape of a glaring yellow eye; now redder, like fire, now alive, now like the eyes in his "Judith," that the woman had said were the "eyes of a corpse just come back to life." But had bells eyes as well as tongues? he asked himself helplessly. He remembered learning about the Cyclops and their single eyes in the middle of their foreheads; now he really saw a worse monster, with an eye of flame: set in its huge, black, bulging lip. Was that the gold the Greek hadi offered him? Surely it was that, and no eye. Of course his fancy had betrayed him. But how coulds the gold have got there and got stuck to the rim of the accursed: bell? How long had he been there, and when were they coming tofetch him? But they could not get in while that fiend was tossing and bellowing in these narrow walls. What was that other noise now?—a whirring of a thousand wheels! Where? It seemed all round; and. now the bell appeared to him in a network of wheels, all going round faster than the eye could follow-a: mass of moving air formed of many hazy circles intertwined; he knew they were wheels, but could not actually see them. He dared not hold his ears and head with his hands, for between each fling of the bell there was not time to lift his hands; and if they were caught-Some one was there now-come to bring him away. How did he get in? But it was not a man; it had long, fair hair and a misty sort of covering. He knew the face Was there an angel of the bell, after all, who was going to stop the great tongue and deliver him? No; that face was a dead face—Judith just as he had painted her, just as he saw her in the corner of his room; and this was his room, and he had been dreaming of the bell. Scarcely-he could not dream of such a noise; then the devil must have got into his room and changed everything. But the clangor never stopped, and never spoke either louder or softerone eternal, dreary, vexing, maddening ring. He would go mad, no doubt, if he stayed there another quarter of an hour: how long had he been there? Now he was fascinated by the unerring accuracy of the strokes, and, in a trance, expected feverishly the next dull boom, and mechanically counted on his fingers till the next was due again, and so on for five minutes. Suppose he should hang on to the tongue; would it make a feather's weight of difference in the time or the sound of the stroke? He wondered how the bell sounded to those in the Place; they did not heed it at all, most likely, or some thought it must be getting near their time for dinner, while pious women were reminded to say a prayer, and some gleeful child would clap its hands and count the strokes. He could count the beats of his hear! and the throbs in his head. He was not mad yet, he hoped, and his thoughts came regularly, and he saw pictures burned into the air one minute and gone the next; if he could have put them on canvas, they would have made his name and fortune. He was sure he could catch their shading; they looked as if fire had been made liquid and colored. It was better than any of the windows in the cathedral, famous as they were through the artworld for their undiscoverable secret of vivid, jewel-like coloring. But one picture followed the other so soon that, had he painted them all. it would have taken him twice the threescore years and ten of an ordinary life, and they would have filled every church in Flanders fuller than twenty chapels in each could require. What was the coloring of "Judith," with the pitiful chemical combination for which he had risked so much, to these rich, mellow, miraculous tones, with a thousand new, unnamable shades, and shadows that looked more like the depths of a dark-blue Italian lake than the darkness of common air? But through all these meditations of a second's length, though they seemed like the reveries of hours, the boom of the pitiless bell went on, crashing through the brain of the prisoner, shattering each new picture which the last interval had stamped on his fancy, sounding to him now like a roaring fall of water, now a ploughing avalanche, now a thunder-clap, now the fall of a burning house, now the thud of earth upon a coffin, now the blow of a massive cudgel on his own head. Instinctively he cowered lower, and a beam struck him on the back with a sudden violent

blow that made him stand upright and remember that the bell was there, but no cudgel; but as he rose he had stretched out his hand, blindly feeling for support, and touched the great rocking monster. A thrill went through his frame; he looked upward and vaguely wondered if this was the end, and he saw his "Judith" again, a shadowy form among the rafters. The next feeling of consciousness was that of lying flat on his back and a strong, cold wind wafting across his feet; he put up his hand to lift his head a little and press his left temple, and then- The bell had only tolled for a quarter of an hour. As soon as it stopped the same men who had taken Jan up came again and found him dead, lying in a cramped position on his side, and

one leg still stretched out beneath the now silent bell.*

* If any one cares to know what became of the picture, he may be interested to hear that it hangs now over the altar of a private oratory in the same city where it was painted. The Greek merchant took it to Constantinople, where it remained in his family till the siege, twenty-eight years later. It was then given by him for safe keeping to his Venetian friend and transferred to Venice, whence the Greek himself, having become a resident of that place, took it back to Bruges and offered it to the canon, on condition of no further mention being made of the circumstances connected with it. offer was gratefully accepted, and it remained till the priest's death in his private collection, the Greek having declared that, what with having paid no price for it and its being a Scriptural subject, he preferred that it should in some way belong to the church rather than to the world. At the canon's death it was sold to a dealer, who sold it again for a high price to an Italian collector, whose descend-ants, in "hard times," parted with it to a rich Englishman. It happened, strangely enough, that it returned to the native city of its unlucky author by an intermarriage between the family of the English connoisseur and that of a passionate lover of art in Bruges, and this time it was transferred as a gift. It has been freely shown to any and every one who asked to see it, and the story attached to it made it one of the "sights" of the old city.

A DAUGHTER OF THE PURITANS.

Rose Standish Howson-that was her name, and very proud she was of it. Back of the Mavflower, she knew little about her ancestors; but certain it was that in that wellfilled vessel one of her forefathers had come to America, and, marrying a distant connection of the veritable Standish family, had handed this name down to all succeeding generations. Rose boasted, so far as it is proper for a well-bred New England girl to boast, that, however it might have been outside of her own country, here at least her lineage was most democratically noble; she belonged—and could prove it, too, out of a little book compiled by her grandfather—thoroughly to the old Puritan race. In all her books the name was written in full-Rose Standish Howson; and it was her unfailing source of regret that her only brother had not been called Miles. John Howson laughed goodnaturedly at his sister's foible, but was really quite as proud as she, though in a more passive way.

Their home was not in Boston. Let this important fact receive our prompt attention. But, since it could not be there, it was in the next best place—an old academic town; in which New England State matters little to our story. for thirty years RoseHowson's father had been the academy's honored principal. His wife had died young, leaving only this son and daughter. John fitted for Harvard at the academy; Rose went steadily through grammar-school and high-school in her native place, then went to Boston with hopes of at least a two years' added course of study there. It resolved itself into one brilliant winter and spring of hard work and exhausting pleasure, symphony concerts, Shakspere clubs, Parker Fraternity lectures, abstruse reading, and keenly exciting conversation; one merry June, one gay class-day, one delightful commencement, when Dr. Howson came to Cambridge to meet old pupils and friends, and see his son bear off the highest honors; then they went home for vacation, and before it was over Dr. Howson sickened and died.

The whole town was in a fervor

of excitement; there was a funeral, to which people came from far and near; resolutions were passed, and in the flush of enthusiasm John Howson, young as he was and just out of college, was elected on trial to fill his father's place. So the brother and sister still lived on in their old home, but into it they infused a new manner of living. Fresh from the intellectual arena, they sought to shape society about them into some likeness to that they loved so well. and they found their old friends and playmates more than ready to meet them half-way. A book club was started, into which the current literature of the day was crowded, and from which, it was placidly affirmed, all "trash" was excluded; but Mill was there, and Darwin, and a strange mixture of German philosophy, which the young men, but more especially the young women, read, or fancied they read, and about which they talked much, after a fashion revealing more ideas than thought. There were "musicals" too, and a Shakspere club, and German and French conversations and readings, and the second winter after Dr. Howson's death there were dramatic entertainments and concerts; and it came to pass that almost every afternoon and evening of Rose's life was filled with some sort of intellectual work or pleasure. She was a capital housekeeper, and so her early mornings were occupied with household cares; but, later, she was always ready for a walk or talk, and her reading was done in snatches by day and by long hours of steady work late at night.

About religion "experimentally" she knew little. The old meeting-house, which the Puritan settlers had built, was still standing, but it had been enlarged and made over, though not beautified. There Rose

had been accustomed to go Sunday after Sunday as a matter of course, and sometimes to the Friday evening prayer-meeting; but she was not "a Christian." Once there had been a revival, when she tried to be converted, but she had failed. Then in Boston she had been taken to hear preachers who were not "orthodox" at all; she had almost feared them at first, because of strange names she had heard applied to them-they had German tendencies, rationalistic tendencies, were free-thinkers. But when she came under the spell of their presence and their eloquence she was fascinated. They appealed to what she thought the highest faculties of her nature—her intellect, her love for the beautiful, her reason. She missed it when she came home and she did more than miss it: she began to doubt. Was old Mr. Grav wiser than the cultured men she had been hearing? He claimed that they were wrong; how did he know that? How could she tell that he was not mistaken? In this one small town, originally occupied by orthodox Congregationalists only, there were now Orthodox Unitarians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Universalists. Roman Catholic priest was serving there too, in a dingy hall in a back street, but "society" rarely noticed him or his work; he and his alike were out of its pale, anomalies, hardly worth mentioning except with pitying wonder or idle jest and scorn. What made Mr. Gray superior to any or all of these in his power of discerning truth?

And while Rose queried thus on Sunday mornings, sitting wearily in her accustomed place at the right of the pulpit, sometimes trying to find out how to be good, but oftener losing herself in memories of the feasts of reason she had known for so brief and bright a while, some one came to town who was to influence her life greatly. Looking up suddenly from one of these reveries, she found herself still in the meeting-house, but opposite her was a new face, a lady's, thin and pale, with searching eyes fixed upon hers, and after service the lady came straight to her pew and held out her hand.

"I am sure you are Miss Howson," she said. "Your friend Grace Roland has told me much of you. I am Ellen Lawton."

Rose's heart leaped up. In those happy Boston days she had often heard Ellen Lawton spoken of as one of the most elegant and cultured women of her time, and she had read her writings with delight, but she had hardly hoped to meet her. It took her breath away with joy when she learned that Miss Lawton had come to live for a while in this quiet country place.

It was a season of keen delight. Rose had thought she knew what it was to revel in intellectual pleasure, but it was something new to meet cone so superior to herself, yet so loving; always ready to listen to her ideas, to help her unfold them, and yet so calm and tranquil. Miss Lawton was an invalid, and, after that first Sunday, Rose never saw her at church again. Once, when Rose stopped on her way thither to leave her some flowers, Miss Lawton said that she was going to sit in the sunshine; would not Rose stay with her? And when Rose demurred, Miss Lawton said gently, "Shall we not please God as well in the beauty of his sunshine as in that bare and cheerless house where you know you do not like to go?"

This was the beginning of Rose's first knowledge of Ellen Lawton's

so-called religious life; they sat and talked all that morning about With a sweet smile upon her calm face, the invalid said quietly that she believed there might be a God: she was not sure, of course; but if there was one, he was kind and good, and loved to see her happy. She made life as bright and beautiful as she possibly could always; it was given her to enjoy. Books and music and art and flowers were parts of her religion; beyond this world she did not look; what came after death she knew not and cared not: if there was a God, he was good and would be good to her; if there was not, the thought of annihilation did not distress her. Rose watched her closely after this: she never heard an impatient word or saw a hasty movement; the life was an exposition of what a great many people would call "the beautiful," and Rose found in it more and more satisfaction for her extreme intellectual cravings.

One morning a servant ran in with blanched face to tell her that Miss Lawton was dead. Rose had known that heart-disease was the fatal malady which was surely sapping at her friend's life, yet this blow fell upon her with an awful suddenness. She went to the house. where they left her to do as she would, for she was the nearest friend Miss Lawton had there; she went up to the silent room, and shut herself in alone with the silent dead. Ellen Lawton lay as they had found her; she must have risen in the morning and dressed with her usual dainty care; then, perhaps feeling some acute pang of the pain to which she was subject, she had sunk upon the couch by the window. Her face was, as in life, calm and noble. about her lay her books that she had loved, her rare pictures looked down upon her, her flowers scented the room; outside the sun shone brightly on the grand hills she had been used to watch, finding in them food for heart and soul both, she said. None of these moved her now at all.

Rose went close to her and looked at her, and looked, and looked, as if she would waken her by the very fixedness of her gaze. What was this thing lying there, this beautiful clay, this voiceless, motionless, tenantless body? Yesterday it spoke to her, kissed her, loved her; what had changed it, gone out of it? The spirit? The soul? Where was that soul then?

She knelt down trembling, and put her hand where the heart had beat not five short hours ago. There was no movement now; and the silence in the room grew terrible. Where was that which yesterday she spoke with? Nowhere? Then to-morrow she herself might be nowhere and nothing.

Suddenly there came to her a memory which she had striven for vears to banish. A stranger had preached at the time of that unforgotten revival; he had painted vividly and unsparingly the torments of the lost. Often in the night Rose had wakened from a dream of it, and found herself cold with horror, and cried out, "I never will believe it." Now like a painting she seemed to see it all again, and through her mind rang the words with which the sermon had ended, "Doubt on as you will, O unbeliever, O careless soul, O faithless Christian! Laugh on as you will, forget as you will. But suppose that you wake up after death and find this true! What then?"

John Howson, hearing the news at school, hurried home at noon to comfort Rose, but she was gone. He found her in that room of death, rocking to and fro upon her knees, her hands held out over the dead, while she was whispering in hoarse tones: "Ellen, is it true? Tell me it is not true." And no one answered.

John lifted her tenderly, and she clung to him like a little child. "Take me home!" she cried, quivering all over. She could not walk; he had to carry her, and all the way she clung to him as if the very touch of something that lived and loved was comfort. "O John! I am so glad you are alive," she sobbed. "Dear John, do not die, do not die!"

He could hardly bear to leave her for afternoon school, and when he came home she was crouching by his arm-chair, while Abby, their old servant, sat looking at her with pitying horror. "You'd best do what you can for her, Master John," she said, "or she'll kill herself going on in this way."

"No, no! not kill myself," Rose answered hysterically. "It is awful to live, but it is worse to die."

John sat down near her, and she took his hand and held it tightly. "I want to *feel* that you are here, and warm and well," she said. "O John! tell me what is true."

"What is true?" he repeated. "Why, I am, I hope; and you, dear child."

"Oh! no," she exclaimed, as if his tender lightness were unbearable. "Is God true? Is there a God? What comes after death?"

He answered her honestly; he had even less faith than she, but his doubts did not trouble him. He lived a life as upright and fair as his neighbors; whether there was a God or not, what difference did it make, so long as he behaved himself? This was John Howson's

creed, if such a title could be ap-

plied to it.

How strong and kind he looked, how honorable he always was! Why should Rose worry, if he did not? Either there was no God, and what they did made no difference—they could live as they liked and get all the pleasure possible—or, if there was a God, he was too good to be ever angry with them. It was a consoling belief; she would take the comfort of it. But alone at night the horror returned. Suppose there was a God who demanded something—she knew not what-from his creatures; she could only express it by the vague term, "to be Christians." She held her head between her hands and tried to think what that meant. Yes, she must be converted, and be sorry for all her sins, and join the church. How were people converted, and what church should she join? Perhaps she had better say a prayer. "O God!" she began, then paused. Her brain was reeling with the doubt whether there was any God at all; and even if there were, what was the use of prayer?

The next morning she went to Mr. Gray. With nerves unstrung by intense feeling, she had little thought left for ordinary greetings or for ceremony. The old man was jarred and hurt by what he thought her rudeness, never dreaming that he was dealing with a soul which was fast losing all care for earthly joys or pains, or for any earthly thing at all, in the one absorbing fear of eternal things. For forty years he had labored in this place in a calm routine, hearing something but comprehending little of the doubts through which the world without was passing. It filled him with horror to hear Rose talk; he had never imagined what thoughts had been working in the mind of his old friend's child.

"What must one do to be a Christian?" she had asked abruptly.

He had not expected such a question, and looked surprised, but he answered simply enough: "You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, my child, and come to him in repentance."

"And where is he?" Rose cried, "and who is he, and what does he

want of me?"

Mr. Gray stared at her in amazement and sorrow. "My dear," he said, "who is he? He is God, and he is everywhere, and he wants your heart."

"How do you know that?" Rose exclaimed. "Tell me how you know

The old man laid his hand upon his Bible. "Where should I know it but here?" he asked.

"But other people think differently," Rose said. "I have read it myself, and I don't find what you preach. The Baptists read the Bible, and so do the Methodists, and so do the Episcopalians, and you cannot agree to be one. How do you know the Bible is true?"

It was of no avail to tell her of internal evidence, or of spiritual conviction, or of visible effects. Quickly enough it became clear that Rose Howson had no faith left in the Lord Jesus Christ as God. She did believe as an historical fact that he had lived once upon earth, and was man, and possibly something more than man; that was all. To everything Mr. Grav said she returned the answer, "How do you know it? Is not the Baptist minister a Christian? -and yet you differ. Is not the Unitarian minister a scholar, and does not he pray to God?—and yet you say he is mistaken." And

when Mr. Gray reminded her of her father, and asked how he would have felt to hear her speak thus, she cried out that she was a woman grown, and it was her own soul she was talking of, and her father could not save that; fathers made very little difference when it was heaven and hell you were thinking about.

"All Christians agree on the vital points," Mr. Gray said; "at least, all evangelical Protestants."

"And what about the unevangelical Protestants and the poor Catholics? and who decides what are the vital points? and why cannot you and the Baptists commune together, then?" The eager questions were poured forth, overwhelming the listener.

Mr. Gray shook his head sadly. "I do not think you are in a fit state to speak of such matters, Rose," he said. "The Lord Jesus Christ died for you. Pray to him that he will himself teach you."

Rose stood up. "Good-by, Mr. Gray," she said gently. "I am afraid I have troubled you. Perhaps you will say a prayer for me sometimes."

"I will indeed, my child," he answered her, with a very troubled look upon his face; "but you must pray too."

"Pray?" she repeated to herself mechanically as she went out of the room. "I wonder how they do it, and what they mean by it, and what good it ever does? Pray? Oh! if I only could."

After this Rose was never seen inside the old meeting-house again. Everybody learned that she was in some religious difficulty; most persons never mentioned the subject to her; some told her not to worry, but to trust; others that it made no manner of difference what

she believed, so long as she was sincere. To the one she answered that the only belief she was sincere in was that she did not know what to believe; to the other she made no reply. But to John once she answered wearily: "If you sat here studying, and I told you the house was on fire, and you could smell it burning, would you keep still at your books, and trust and not worry, because other people said it was not your house?"

On one occasion she took up a Protestant Episcopal Book of Common Prayer which she found in her father's library, and, turning its pages, came to the Apostles' Creed. It comforted her to read it; she thought it must be a blessed thing to be brought up always with that impressed upon one, and never to know anything else. She had some Protestant Episcopal friends; they seemed very content. But, still idly turning the leaves, she came to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and her eye lighted on the words, "As the Church of Ferusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred; so also the Church of Rome hath erred. not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." So then even they could not be sure and settled in their belief, she said to herself; for if Rome and Jerusalem and Antioch had erred, why not the Protestant Episcopal Church of America? It was the closing drop of bitterness. John found her that noon in as terrible a state as on the day of Ellen Lawton's death

"Rose," he said gravely, "for some time, as you know, I have doubted the existence of a God; but I will tell you now that my doubts on that point are settled. Wherever and whatever he may be there surely is one; for I am con

vinced that no one could suffer as you do without some reality to cause it."

The unexpected words brought a ray of comfort; she lifted her poor pale face to his with a look of pitiful longing. "Then, John," she said, "don't you think he must know how dreadful the suffering is, and that he will tell me some day where to find him?"

The tears—a man's rare tears—sprang to John Howson's eyes. "I surely think he will, Rose," he answered; and he stooped and kissed her with great compassion. His love was the only comfort Rose had now, and at times she found no comfort eyen in that.

Fanny Mason came to see her in the afternoon. People did not come to the house as freely as they used to come; Rose showed too plainly that she did not care to see them. But Fanny had been an intimate family friend always; the affection between the two girls was more like that of relatives than of friends. Fanny was not at all intellectual, had never known a shadow of doubt; she ran in to chat and gossip, not waiting for replies, and brought a sense of refreshment, or at least of change, to Rose's burdened mind.

"To-morrow is Ascension Day," she said. "The Episcopalians are going to have service and trim their church beautifully—white lilacs and wistaria and lilies of the valley and bunches of forget-menot. It will be lovely; wouldn't you like to see it?"

"I am tired and sick of prettiness and pettiness," Rose said.

"Rose Howson! What next? You used to say that the beautiful satisfied you entirely."

"I thought it did," Rose answered sadly. "But where is it? All

at once it failed me. Now I see a death's-head behind all."

"Rose! Not really?"

Rose almost smiled at Fanny's scared face. "No, Fanny; not literally, at least. Once, though, I did really see it in the very centre of loveliness, and I cannot forget."

"I wish you could forget," Fanny said pityingly. "I wish we could be little girls once more, Rose."

"No, no!" Rose answered, shuddering. "Not to live all these years over again. But, O Fanny! if I only could forget for ever so short a while!"

The strained, wild passion of her look and manner frightened Fanny; she tried to return to her former chatty lightness. "I'll tell you what you had better do," she said, "since you are tired of the beautiful. The Catholics are going to keep Ascension Day too. What a queer set they are! Do you know that they call this the month of Mary, and in their hall her image is dressed in lace and flowers, with candles burning around it all day long? It is not so pretty there, I assure you. Suppose you try that." Then laughing as if she had suggested the most absurd of absurdities, Fanny went

The dark cloud of depression which had come upon Rose that morning, and had lifted slightly at John's words, shadowed her now more densely than ever. She looked about the room which John's taste and hers had made so fair. How everything palled upon her! What good was it to try to make life as beautiful as possible, if even in life she ceased to care for the beautiful? The strong, the true, the lasting, was what she needed now.

It seemed to her that there was no hope anywhere. She fled out hto the open air, and walked fast to escape her haunting thoughts; but there was no escape from self. Passing the hall where the Catholics had services, she saw an old woman climbing the steps, remembered Fanny's words, and followed her. "Since the beautiful fails me," she thought with a bitter smile, "I will look at what is not beautiful."

It was a very dingy hall, and uninviting. On the side walls were poor wood-cuts representing the scenes of the Passion. On a plain white wood altar a lamp was burning. Near by hung a colored print of the Saviour, but as Rose had never seen him portrayed before—with his Heart exposed upon his breast, and great blood-drops falling from it. Rose shrank from the sight; it displeased her. Close by the altarrail was a highly-colored and gaudily-decorated statue of the Blessed Virgin, with flowers distastefully arranged about it. The old woman had fallen on her knees before it, and was praying. Rose wondered at her.

But she was strangely conscious of a peculiar quiet in the place; it soothed her. She sat down on one of the benches, and took up a book lying there. The Key of Heaven it was called; a very soiled and worn book it was; she hardly liked to touch it. It opened at the Apostles' Creed. "He ascended into heaven," she read.

Who was "he"? Jesus Christ—God! So Catholics believed as well as Mr. Gray; in this they were agreed. But, oh! what difference did it make? God and heaven were so very far away—if indeed there were a heaven anywhere—that who on earth could tell anything about them? She looked up wearily from the book; again her eyes met the poor print of the Sacred

Heart, the poor statue of the holy Mother. Like a flash the thought came into her mind, "Jesus Christ—God—ascended into heaven, and he had a heart like ours, and he had a mother."

It was not as if she were uttering a belief—whether Jesus Christ was God she did not know; she was not even thinking about it then. But it was as if she had grasped a link in a mighty chain, which, if one other link could be supplied, would solve and settle all doubt for ever. Over and over she said the words, fearing to lose or forget them: "Jesus Christ—God—ascended into heaven, and he had a heart like ours, and he had a mother." If this was true, how God in heaven must pity her, how he must love her!

And suddenly the tears were falling on Rose's cheeks. When she had wept last she could not tell; certainly not since Ellen Lawton's death, though she had often craved the relief of tears. Now they fell softly and plenteously, while she kept repeating the strange formula with a keen sense that it soothed her and she was resting; and oh! she had been so tired. A mother, a mother-how very sweet it must be to have a mother! And a God with a heart like ours, a heart that could be wounded and bleed and suffer sorely; oh! how one must love a God like that.

"John," she said abruptly, when they were sitting by the study-lamp after tea, "what are Catholics? I mean, what do you know about them?"

"Not much of anything," he answered in some surprise, "except as one is always coming upon them in history and the papers. Why?"

"What makes them different from Protestants? Aren't you always coming upon them too?"

"Not in the same way, child. You know that Protestants are not so—so obtrusive."

"But why, John? I want to

know about them."

There was an animation in her manner which reminded him of old times; he saw that she was really in earnest, and set himself to answer her in his straightforward, kindly way, glad to notice any change for the better in her tone of mind.

"I have never thought very much about them, Rose," he said; "but every general reader must come in contact with them somehow, even if, like me, he has not had personal acquaintance with them in society. Of course you know the distinguishing features of confession and transubstantiation, the papacy, the worship of saints and relics, prayer for the dead."

"Are you sure they are all

wrong?"

"Not at all. We were brought up to think them wrong, but I have never looked so deeply into the matter as to make such an assertion on my own judgment; it never has seemed worth while. However, if you care for my opinion, I will tell you what, from all I have read and heard, presents itself to my mind as the peculiar and fatal mark of Catholicism. It is its claim of absolute authority over the bodies and minds and souls of men-a claim which reached its height of tyranny in the declaration of the infallibility of the pope."

"What does that mean, John?"

"Why, that whatever the pope may say—no matter who he is, remember, if he is only a pope—that thing you and I and every one must believe to be right. However, I mean to be just to all sects. If I have the idea rightly, their exact claim is this: that the pope, as pope,

speaking to the whole church as the Head of the Church, cannot be mistaken, simply because God will not permit him to be. Do you understand?"

She was sitting in the full light of the lamp. He noticed the quiet, thoughtful look upon her face; it made him very happy to see it there.

"John," she said after a minute's pause, "why should it not be?"

"What, Rose?"

"I mean, if there is a God Almighty, why could he not keep a man from error in teaching, just as easily as he could make a man in the first place?"

"Really," said John with an amused smile at what he thought her brightness, "I don't see but that he could; that is, if you give up the idea that we are free agents."

"But do they say he is not generally a free agent?" Rose asked, like one thinking out a problem. "Only, when God wants to use him to teach the church, he will not let him teach a lie. Why should not an Almighty God do that? O John! look here."

She hurried to the bookcase, brought back and opened the Book of Common Prayer. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church," she read. "Then there are those who do really believe it; who really think that now—to-day—there is a church where God speaks plainly and unmistakably, and always will speak so, and there can be no error?"

"Yes, Rose."

Was it only the glow of the lamplight shining upon her face? Did his eyes deceive him, or was that creature, radiant with happiness and a bloom of beauty never witnessed there before—was this his poor and fading Rose of that very noon? Once in his life he had beard a chi. I laugh who had been suddenly and entirely released from excruciating pain—a low, sweet laugh most exquisite to hear in the sense it gave of indescribable relief. Such a laugh he heard now from Rose's lips, which he had almost feared would never so much as smile again.

"John," she said exultingly, "I There is a Heavenly Father—God—and he made us all. And there is Jesus Christ-Godwho ascended into heaven, and he had a heart like ours, and he had a mother. And there is a Holy Ghost-God-who is with church, and so she cannot lie. how those three are one, and how the blood of Christ saves us, we may never be able to explain; but, if there is a God, he will never let his church tell lies or err or make mistakes, and whatever his church says that we ought to believe, whether we understand it or not. And only Catholics claim an infallible voice. John, I am going to try it. I shall speak to the priest tomorrow."

"You are your own mistress, Rose," he said gravely. "You can do as you please. I only warn you that after that one act of your own choice, you must give up your reason and will to another."

The color flashed more brightly in her cheeks. He was amazed as he looked at her; once again the fire was in her eyes, and the brilliant intellect shone in the face that had been dulled so long.

"I shall give up my reason and my will to God," she said. "It is he who will speak to me, without erring and without lying. I do not expect to be as wise as my Creator, and I am sure I shall be none the worse for it when he who is wisdom itself teaches me. It is God that I am talking about, John, and

not a mere man that can make mistakes. I am quite content to yield my intellect and my will to him."

And then, as suddenly as it had come, the glow faded from her face: she was kneeling down beside him with that look of anguish in her eyes which for so many long weeks had wrung his heart with pity. "You know I have suffered," she said, "but, John, it is only the outside you have seen; you can't tell what it has been within. And now a great light is coming-I am sure of it. It is not the love of beauty or anything I used to crave. It is the thing I need and we all need: something stronger than we are: something that cannot by any possibility teach us a lie; something that cannot by any possibility err; something plain to hear and plain to see-infallible! I have not got it yet; I am only on my way to it. If it was in your power to stop me, would you do it?"

"I do not understand you, Rose," he answered thoughtfully, "nor do I entirely follow your train of reasoning. Still, I grant that for a temperament such as yours has of late disclosed itself to be there is comfort in what you think you see. No, I would not say a word to stop you, my poor child! It goes against the grain to think of one of us becoming a Catholic; but if anything will help you, I shall bless the hand that brings relief."

She looked full in his face with a look of grave surprise. "I did not think that of you," she said; "you always have seemed so honest. Don't you know that nothing in heaven or earth can satisfy me, unless it is the truth? No shams, no half-way things, but something like rock that will never fail. I did not think that of you, John!"

John sat alone and puzzled over

her words that night. "I always have to puzzle things out," he said. "They never come to me like a flash, as they do to Rose. Stop, though! I am wrong there. She has been months in getting at it, and they were months that almost killed her. Why was it?"

Plainly enough he saw at last why it was. God, the soul, eternitythose things which are invisiblewere more real to Rose than the visible things. And should they not be? He knew very well that he would be stung to the quick to be told that his body—his material, tangible, lower nature—had the upper hand in his life. No, his reason, his intellect—something intangible and invisible anyhow, by whatever name you named it-was the governing power. And if so, then why should not One invisible and intangible be the ruler of that, and claim from him more than a merely blameless life and an honest fame: demand submission of his will and reason and thought? John shook his head ruefully; the idea struck home; he did not like it, but there it was.

The next day Rose quietly laid before him her little Catechism, open at the very first section, and John read this:

" Question. Who made you?

" Answer. GOD.

"Q. Why did he make you?

"A. That I might know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and be happy with him for ever in the next.

"Q. To whose likeness did he make

vou?

"A. To his own image and likeness.

" Q. Is this likeness in your body or in your soul?

"A. In my soul.

"Q. In what is your soul like to God?

"A. Because my soul is a spirit endowed with understanding and free will, and is immortal—that is to say, can never die.

"Q. In what else is your soul like to

"A. Because as in God there are three persons and one God, so in man there is one soul and three powers.

"Q. Which are the three powers?
"A. Will, memory, and understanding.

"Q. Which must we take most care of, our body or our soul?

"A, Of our soul.

" Q. Why so?

"A. Because, 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

"Q. What must we do to save our

soul i

"A. We must worsnip God by faith, hope, and charity; that is, we must believe in him, hope in him, and love him with all our heart.

"Q. How shall we know the things

which we are to believe?

"A. From the Catholic Church of God, which he has established by innumerable miracles, and illustrated by the lives and deaths of innumerable saints."

"John," said Rose steadily, "be honest with God."

Professor Howson is a name which no one hears now, though it was once supposed that it would rank among those of New England's noblest scholars. But John Howson teaches still. People had often said of him that he would never marry; that his books and his sister were enough for him. He never did marry; but it was God and the church of God that satisfied him. Once, in a great city, an old friend of his collegiate days, who had not heard of him for years, met him face to face in his dress of a religious, and stopped him in utter amazement.

"John Howson! You are unmistakable, but how is this? I was told of your change, but did not know it had gone so far. Are not your Puritan ancestors groaning in their shrouds, man, because of such doings?"

The priest returned a courteous answer, and would have turned to other themes, but his friend persisted. Then, not with the old outspoken frankness as of one who feared none, but instead, thoughtfully and humbly as in the very fear of God, there came this reply:

"Once I matched my mind with the mind of God, and judged him, and thought his will to be of no account. It was a great sin, and he saved me from it. After that I could only say, as another in like case once said, 'I cannot give God less than all.'"

"A great sin?" his friend repeated. "I do not understand that."

He saw a shade of peculiar awe creep over the countenance before him. "And is it no sin," John Howson asked in a deep voice, "to hear said in the face of God that there is no God? to have counted your own judgment superior to his? to have given God the lie? One who is now of the mightiest saints thought that he did God service while he fought against him, and afterward he named himself the chief of sinners. But I did not so much as think of the service of God at all in matters of belief."

"I can't see the fault in that," his friend said wonderingly. "If it was murder you had on your conscience, I might sympathize with you; but this!"

"You are fresh from Massachusetts," said Father Howson, "and it is years since I was there. Do they still count the mind as nobler than the body, and the intellect as among their highest gifts?"

"Yes," was the proud reply.

"Some time," returned Father Howson with deep meaning in his tone, "we all shall have to learn that God judges sin of the mind by as terrible a judgment as sin of the body, and that he demands his gifts with usury. Believe me, it is better to forestall that judgment, and to meet that demand here than hereafter."

And Rose? Long since she learned to say, "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house; and the place where thy glory dwelleth." Long since she learned that there is One invisible who is fairer than any child of man, and to him she gave the heart which a wealth of intellectual and earthly loveliness had failed to satisfy. She has learned that there is a nobler Blood than any that the world can boast; His place is with the nobility of an eternal kingdom, whose peculiar marks of honor are poverty, and self-renunciation, and an utter lowliness of obedience, whereby every faculty of one's nature is brought with a glad free-will into the obedience of Christ. One day the daughter of the Puritans heard another voice than theirs call her by that tender name: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty: for he is: thy Lord God." Once before, but, after sore struggle and heartrending suffering, she had heard that voice. Hearing it again, she rose up joyfully and followed it, as then, without delay

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.

It is now many years since, during a summer ramble, I found myself at A-k, now nothing more than a hamlet in population, but retaining traces of having once been a place of very considerable importance, and boasting of very remote antiquity. The remains of the wall are, indeed, locally attributed to the Romans, probably because they are lofty and very strong, and it is the habit of ignorant people to refer all great works to that wonderful people. In this instance, however, tradition is certainly wrong, as the walls bear unmistakable evidence of mediæval origin, being in parts much enriched with Gothic work.

The little town stands on a plateau enclosed between a bend of the Rhine and the steep bluff on which the ruins of an old castle stand perched, equally watching the little burgh below and the counterpart castle on the opposite side of the Rhine at its next bend.

The eagles that once lived in and sought their prey from that lofty nest have long since crumbled into dust and have even passed from the memory of man, leaving for sole representatives the choughs and the crows, and perhaps a jolly old owl to keep up revelry at night.

The horses that those old knights rode must have been of a sure-footed breed, for it is hard to conceive how any quadruped, save a goat, could have mounted the path I scrambled up among the vines; but it is with the village and the village church that we have to do.

Who built the Rhine churches?

They all, with a few exceptions, are strikingly alike; though varying in size, number of towers, and many other particulars, they have mostly a strict resemblance in general conception and detail. To cite an instance: The cathedral at Coblentz might stand as the type of twenty others; instead of being individual and standing out alone—an effort of genius like Cologne, Strasbourg, Notre Dame, Ely, or Winchester—they have all the same resemblance to one another that a little oak has to a big one.

The church at A—k was no exception. Cathedral it might almost be called from its great size; but there was no bishop there, and it was only a parish church! With its three great towers, vast nave, long aisles, and noble choir, it seemed as if it might well hold all the population for many miles around, and the extremely small congregation that were present at the celebration of the High Mass that morning appeared ridiculously out of proportion. It was a high festival-the Annunciation-it is therefore to be assumed that the bulk of the population were there, and the High Mass was at the somewhat early hour of half-past five!

After the Mass was over, and the last peal of the organ had died away, and the patter of the last footstep been lost in the distance, as it still wanted a considerable time to my breakfast hour, I strolled round the great empty church. There seemed to be nothing of value in it. If

it had ever possessed any of the treasures of art, they had probably perished or been carried away during the long wars that devastated the country after the period of the Reformation, for I found nothing worthy of notice. I had just concluded to leave the church when my eye was arrested by what I took to be an accident which had happened to the crucifix on one of the side altars. At first I supposed that it had received a blow which had nearly broken off the right arm of the figure. On looking more closely I perceived that it was evidently of great age, and the arm I supposed to be broken stood out from the cross at a considerable angle, and hung about half way down the side, the nail by which it had once been attached still remaining in the hand.

Whilst I was still wondering as to the nature of the accident which had befallen the quaintly-carved crucifix a quiet and pleasant voice roused me from my revery.

"I see, sir, that you are examin-

ing our curious old crucifix!"

Turning round I recognized the old priest who had sung Mass, and encouraged by his amiable manner and address, I stated the matter I had been pondering over, and asked for an explanation.

"There has been no accident," said he; "the distortion which you notice in the right arm has existed far beyond the memory of man.

"The figure is carved out of some very hard wood, and all out of a single block—there being no joining

in any part of it."

Still more astonished, I asked what could have been the motive of representing the Saviour in so strange an attitude; the more, as the hole for the nail still remaining in the hand was still to be seen plainly in the wood, whilst the hand was in the position in which it would have been had it just struck a blow.

"That is a curious story, and is, in fact, the only legend I know of connected with this church.

"The crucifix is held in great reverence, and people come from great distances to pray before it. As I see you are a stranger, perhaps you will partake of an old man's breakfast, whilst you listen to him as he relates the traditional story, which being connected with this church, where he has grown old, he regards as almost peculiarly his own. Besides, the story is too long to be listened to either standing or fasting."

Thanking the good priest for his kind offer, I followed him into the little presbytery almost adjoining the church, where we were soon seated on each side of a little table taking off the edge of our appetites with eggs, coffee, and rolls.

When we had somewhat appeased our craving, the good man com-

menced, saying:

"The tradition of which I have to speak dates back a long way, and has at least so much of authenticity about it as attaches to the undoubted antiquity of the crucifix itself, and to the fact that, for many generations at least, no other account has been current.

"My grandfather used to tell it to me when an infant on his knee, and said that he had heard it from his grandfather in the same way.

"In which of the many wars which have scourged this unfortunate land since the rebel monk Luther brought the curse of religious dissension upon it, the circumstances which I am about to relate occurred, I am unable to determine; for the traditions, which agree in all other points, differ on this.

"On the whole I incline to the one which places these events during the period of Gustavus Adolphus' invasion, and attribute them to the particular band which was led by his lieutenant Oxenstiern, who certainly did sack the place. This would place it at more than two hundred years ago, and it certainly is not more recent.

"At that period there lived in A—k a widow and her daughter. They were very poor, belonging to the peasant class, and supported themselves in winter by spinning; and when the spring came round, they would go off to the steep mountain-sides, where they helped to dress the vines or gather the vintage, according to the season.

"They never went to distant vineyards, because the mother, having in her youth met with a severe accident, was unable, from its effects, to walk far. There was also another reason: for Gretchen, who was the prettiest girl for many miles around, was also the best, and never failed, winter or summer, to hear Mass and to spend some time in prayer before that very crucifix which has attracted your attention.

"There was, no doubt, some older tradition about its origin, for it had a great reputation for sancity even then; this tradition, whatever it may have been, seems, however, to have been swallowed up by the overwhelming interest of the subsequent event, which I am about to relate.

"All accounts agree that when Gretchen first worshipped there the crucifix had nothing unusual about it to distinguish it from any other, except its artistic merit.

"The hand was then nailed to the cross. There, however, kneeling in front of it, wrapped in prayer, this young girl spent all the time she

could spare from the humble duties of her life.

"She milked the cow, the one valuable possession of her mother, who had the right of common; she washed the clothes, cooked and did the work about her mother's house, and acted as her crutch as she climbed the steep paths of the vineyard—for, in spite of her lameness, she was a skilful vinedresser—in short, she was all in all to her only parent.

"With all this labor and care Gretchen grew in grace and beauty; and though so devout, she was as bright and cheerful and winning in her ways as the most worldly of her

young companions.

"Never, however, could she be tempted to go to any of the merrymakings or harvest-homes or vintage feasts that were held at a distance; her invariable answer was, 'My mother cannot walk so far.'

"She had many suitors; and admirers came from a great distance.

"To all Gretchen was equally kind and considerate; but to none did she show any sort of preference, so that all the youths for many miles on both sides of the Rhine were pulling caps for her.

"Thus things went on till she was nineteen, when, to the great surprise of all, she was seen to take up with and give a decided preference to the attentions of a young stranger who had been in the place only a few weeks.

"The favored youth was a journeyman clockmaker from Nuremberg, who was going through his year of wandering, and was at the moment settled in the town, working for the only tradesman in his line of business in the place.

"A—k was then much more populous, as you may well suppose, being able to support such a trade

"This youth, whose name was Gotliebe Hunning, was handsome and showy, wearing his hair in long locks down his back, and spending much of his earnings in dress. He sung, played the guitar, and was reputed wild, though no harm could be alleged against him.

"The old folks shook their heads, and deplored that so sweet and modest a girl as Gretchen should be seen so much with a roisterer

like Gotliebe.

"Somehow it had been no sin to sing and be gay like God's unreasoning creatures before the sour times of Calvin, Huss, and Luther; but though their errors had not penetrated here to any great extent, something of their acid had been imparted to the leaven of life.

"So things were, however, and all the time that Gretchen gave to pleasure—which was little enough, poor child, for they were very poor and her mother was very helpless—she spent with this handsome, clever youth; not that she abandoned her devotion, or was less frequently prostrated before the crucifix; for indeed, if possible, she was found there more than ever. Still, the gossips shook their heads and remarked upon it.

"One would say, 'Ah! I never trusted that meek manner of hers. I always knew she would surprise us some day, and here it is! It is always so with the very good ones!' 'Ay, ay,' her neighbor would say, 'cat will after cream! And Eve has left her mark upon the best of them! The girl is a girl like other young things; but I did hope better things of Gretchen, so well brought up as she has been!'—thus they ran on.

"Soon, however, it began to be said that Gotliebe was sobering down; he frequented the tavern less, never danced except with Gretchen, sang less and worked more.

"He was admitted to be a master of his craft, and when it became known that he was engaged in all his leisure hours in making a great clock—the very one the chimes of which you were admiring-for the church, there was less head-shaking, and more talk about Gretchen's luck in making so great a catch. Still he made no change in his showy dress, and indeed I think that genius, at least in art, often shows itself in that way, and tradition testifies that he was no mean proficient in the art he practised, of which indeed we still have proof every hour.

"Then it began to be observed that Gotliebe was frequently in the church with Gretchen, and had become a regular attendant at Mass. Still, things went on in the same way and no betrothal was spoken of, until, after the war had again broken out and seemed to be drifting this way, it suddenly became known that Gretchen had consented to be married to Gotliebe without loss of time, and that he was to take a house and her mother was

to move into it.

"In this remote place, far from any of the great avenues of trade—for vessels usually passed it by, no great roads branching off here, and there being no steamboats invented—news came doubtfully and seldom, and war was at the very door at a moment when only distant rumors had reached A—k.

"However, to return to Gretchen and Gotliebe: You may be sure that what goes on now went on then, and that all the busybodies were agog as to what they were to live upon; how she was to be dressed, and who were to be the bridemaids; but as the world spine round

in spite of the flies that buzz about it, so they went their way regardless of all that was said about them.

"In the meantime, the rumors grew more frequent and more particular concerning the cloud of war which was every day drifting nearer and nearer, until the dark mass seemed ready at any moment to burst upon the unfortunate village itself.

"Indeed, news came from neighboring towns and villages that they had been taken and burned by the heretic Swedes, and tales, no doubt often exaggerated, of the violent and dissolute conduct of Oxenstiern's troopers, kept every one in terror.

"Affairs were in this threatening condition when the wedding-morning came; and, as the story was, though Gretchen had little to spend on dress, no art and no expense could have produced a lovelier bride than stood before the altar of the Crucifix that morning. She wore nothing but a simple dress of white, and a wreath of apple-blossoms, for the trees were just then in flower.

"The wedding-bells were ringing, and the humble bridal-party had just reached the house which Gotliebe had taken, when cannon were heard, and a band of fierce Swedish soldiers rushed into the village.

"The firing proceeded from an attack upon the castle, which still stands at about a mile from this place, and the invaders of the village were army followers and a few of the more dissolute of Oxenstiern's soldiery, who, encountering the bridal-party, at once interrupted its progress, treating the bridemaids rudely; and one of them, who threw his arms around Gretchen, was immediately struck down by

Gotliebe, who, as before said, was a spirited youth.

"One of the invaders, without a moment's hesitation, struck him lifeless, and attempted to seize the bride, who, with a shriek, fled and took refuge in the church.

"Thither Gretchen was pursued by the band; and when after many hours the troops were withdrawn, and the priest, with a few of the boldest of his flock, ventured into the sacred edifice, they found the high altar desecrated, the sacred vessels gone, and other sacrileges committed, which filled them with horror; but on turning to the altar of the Crucifix, they found the bride prostrate before it, either in a trance or ecstasy, with the soldier who had pursued her lying with his skull broken, and his iron head-piece smashed in as though a sledgehammer had struck it, and the arm of the crucifix distorted as you see it now.

"On being questioned, the young widow could only say: 'God has protected me!'

"The poor mother only lingered a day or two afterwards, and was borne to the grave at the same time as the unfortunate Gotliebe.

"Gretchen never knew, or would not say, more than I have repeated of what had occurred at the altar of the Crucifix. It was unplundered!

"The people, however, all said that God, who had borne the insults and profanation directed against himself at the high altar, had interposed when the virtue of a pure virgin was threatened, and had himself, by the hand of his image, smitten the would-be violator dead, leaving the distorted arm as an admonition for ever."

We were both silent after this recital, and for some moments toyed with the fragments of our break-

At length, raising my head, I asked: "And you, father—do you believe this tale?"

A sweet, soft smile novered about his lips, as he replied: "Nothing in which the goodness of God is instanced is hard for me to believe! He is less ready to show his anger, so that, though we live in the midst of his wonders, we have got so used to them that it is said that there are those who deny his existence."

This was said as if to himself. Then, speaking more collectedly, he continued:

"You English would rather believe in ghosts and devils than in the good God. Whence do you suppose they derive their existence and their power?"

I assured him that I was of the same faith as himself, and only asked because I wished to have the opinion of a cultivated man on the subject of this particular legend, which had greatly interested me, and of which there remained so singular an evidence.

After a moment's pause, he said: "Think of the facts yourself, sir. This tradition, which is certainly very old, is either true in its main features or it was made to fit the crucifix. Assume this last to be the case, how did so singular an image come into existence? Made to hang the tradition upon? Scarcely in so small a community, where all must have known each other. Besides, it is a work of art, and I have been told that as such it is of Such a work could rare merit. hardly have been produced for an unworthy object, and would have been difficult to substitute for one of inferior workmanship. If I called it a legend, it is because it has an

air of romance about it. But God is good, and does what he pleases!"

I had nothing more to say; so I asked what had become of Gretchen, and was told that she had been taken as a lay sister in the small convent at the head of the valley, whence she had continued, to the very day of her death, to come and pray at the foot of the crucifix, where in fact she was at last found dead, in her eighty-seventh year, and that during the whole time she had been regarded as a saint.

"The altar," he resumed, "is universally regarded with great reverence, and is always spoken of as the Altar of Succor to a very considerable distance up and down the Rhine, and the unusual number of models in wax or wood which you see hanging before it indicate how special favors are reputed to have been granted there."

"I noticed them," I replied, "when first I entered Belgium, where I saw many. I was much struck with what I thought the singular idea of offering a leg in wax to obtain the cure of lameness, an eye for blindness, and so on."

"I perceive, sir," said the good priest, "that you have fallen into the error of mistaking cause for effect. These models and tokens are in no case hung before the altar until after the cure prayed for has been effected, when it is the pious custom of the people to commemorate the blessing they have received—much as one out of the ten lepers cured by our Lord did—by showing gratitude, that all may see what he has done for them.

"Some of these emblems," continued he, "have curious histories attached to them, whose events have occurred under my own eye.

"I will give you one instance only, not to be tedious.

"Did you notice a small bottle amongst the objects we speak of?"

I acknowledged that I had not done so, having paid little attention to them.

"Well, there is one there at all events, which I myself attached to the bunch, under the following circumstances:

"Some years ago, two brothers, both young men, were leaving a wharf some miles up the river, at twilight. The steamer having landed its passengers, was on the point of starting, when the elder of the two remonstrated with his brother upon the condition in which he found him; in fact, the youth was addicted to drinking, and gave much trouble to his elder brother, who was a remarkably steady young I will not mention their names, as both are living; but for convenience will call the elder Fritz and the younger Carl.

"Carl was given to be quarrelsome in his cups, and on this occasion was more so than usual, and began to struggle with his brother, who wanted to get him on board, as the boat was in the act of starting; in doing so, however, he lost his balance, and they fell into the water together.

"Carl, with the luck which is proverbially attributed to drunkards, was almost immediately pulled out by those who had seen the accident. Fritz, however, appeared to have been carried away by the current, all search proving in vain.

"Carl, now completely sobered, was terribly afflicted, as he was deeply attached to his brother, and remembering the traditional sanctity of the Altar of Succor, he started off and walked all night,

and, wet as he was, threw himself at the foot of the altar. There he remained for some hours; whilst prostrate there, another man came in and knelt beside him.

"It is always rather dark at that side altar, which, being situated in the north aisle, was darker still at that hour of the morning.

"I had observed the prostrate man soon after the church had been opened in the morning. When next I passed I saw him prostrate still, with another kneeling beside him.

"Thinking there might be something wrong, I went up, and stooping, laid my hand upon his shoulder; he was wet, and a shiver ran through him at my touch. To my surprise I saw that there was a pool of water round the kneeling man.

"At my touch the man raised himself, exclaiming, as he did so, 'Yes, I did it; but I did not mean it! Take me if you will!'

"Before I could explain, the other rose to his feet, exclaiming, in a voice of great emotion, 'Carl!' In an instant the brothers were in each other's arms, and explanations were made. It appears that Fritz went down at once, and, being unable to swim, was borne down for some distance under water. coming to the surface his head came in contact with some substance which he instinctively grasped; it was wood, and was large enough to enable him to keep his head above water. He drifted down the current till, almost dead with cold, he found himself cast ashore at a bend of the river.

"He was glad to find a cottage door open, where he was welcomed to warm himself and to share the peasants' humble meal. There also he learned that he was not far from A—k and the wonderful Altar of

Succor, and at once resolved to come here, moved by gratitude for his escape, and anxiety for his brother, of whose fate he was of course ignorant.

"A year passed, and one morning Carl called upon me, and I then fully learned the particulars I have just related.

"At his request I attached the small bottle to the other tokens, in gratitude, as he said, for the victory

there granted to him over the evil habit which must, otherwise, have rendered his life a curse.

"He also left a sum of money for the poor, and told me that his brother and himself were both married, and living as prosperous merchants at a considerable town lower down the Rhine.

"Go thou and do likewise!" added the good priest, laughing as we shook hands at parting.

A STORY WITH TWO VERSIONS.

THE OLD CLERK'S VERSION.

Yes, sir, this is Brentwood. And you are of the race, you say, though not of the name. Clarkson, sir? Surely, surely. I remember well. Miss Jane Brent—the first Miss Brent I can recall—married a Clarkson. So you are her grandson, sir? Then you are right welcome to me and mine. Come in, come in. Or, if you will do me the honor, sit here in the porch, sir, and my Kate will bring you of her best, and right glad will we be to wait again on one with the Brent blood in him.

None of the name left? Ah! Mr. Clarkson, have you never heard, then? But you must have heard of James Brent. Surely, surely. He lives still, God pity him! What's that? You want to hear the story out? Well, sir, no man living can tell you better than I, unless it be Mr. James' self. Settle yourself comfortably, Mr. Clarkson, and I'll tell you all.

Yes, this is Brentwood. 'Twas your great-great-grandsire founded it, two hundred years back, he and his brother—James and William. They began the work which was to grow and grow into foundries and factories, and the bank that was to ruin all. But I'm telling the end afore the beginning. The next two brothers built the church you see there, sir, down the road; and the next two after them added the tower and founded the almshouses; and then came the fourth James and William Brent,

and one of them was an idiot, and the other was and is the last of the name.

I was twenty years older than Mr. James, and, before ever he came into business, had served with his father. I watched him grow up, and I loved him well. But from the first I knew he was different from the rest of his race. He was his mother all over again—a true Mortimer, come of nobles, not of townsfolk; all fire and sweetness and great plans for people's good and happiness, but with little of the far-sighted Brent prudence. He was just as tender of Mr. William as if he had had all the wits of himself, and used to spend part of every day with him, and amuse him part of many a night when the poor gentleman could not sleep.

Their father died just when they came of age. They were twins, the last Brent Brothers, sir; and 'twas a great fortune and responsibility to fall full and with no restraint into such young hands. Mr. James seemed like one heart-broken for nigh a year after, and carried on everything just as his father had done, till we all wondered at it: then he saw Miss Rose Maurice, and loved her-as well indeed he might-and after that things changed. She was as simple in all her ways as she was beautiful, and would have thought my cottage good enough, so long as he was in it with her. But he!-well, sir, I know he has kissed the very ground she trod on, and he didn't think a queen's palace too fine for her.

As soon as ever he saw her he loved her and set his soul to win her; and the very next day he began a new home in Brentwood. Where is it? Alack! alack! sir. Wait till ye must hear. Let's think, for a bit, of only the glad days now.

You could not call it extravagance exactly. It set the whole town alive. So far as he could, he would have none but Brentwood folk to work upon the place where his bride was to dwell. And he said it was time that so old a family should have a home that would last as long as they. Ah! me, as

long as they!

Of course there was a city architect and a grand landscape gardener: but, oh! the thoughtfulness of him whom we were proud to call our master. There, in the very flush of his youth and love and hope, he took care of the widows and the little children; contrived to make work for them; was here and there and everywhere; and there was not a beggar nor an idler in Brentwood-not one. The house rose stately and tall; he had chosen a fair spot for it, where great trees grew and brooks were running, all ready to his hand; and that city man-why, sir, 'twas marvellous how he seemed to understand just how to make use of it all, and to prune a little here and add a little there, with vines and arbors and glades and a wilderness, till you didn't know what God had done and what he had given his creatures wit to do. And in the sunniest corner of the house-Brent Hall, as they called it-Mr. James chose rooms for Mr. William, who was pleased as a child with it all, and used to sit day by day and watch the work go on.

All the time, too, the Brent iron-

foundries were being added to and renovated, till there was none like them round about: and the town streets were made like city streets, and the town itself set into such order as never before; and when all was ready-'twas the work of but three years, sir-when the house was hung with pictures and decked with the best; in the spring. when the grass and the trees were green, and the flowers were blooming fair, then he brought her home. And when I saw her-well. sir, first I thought of the angels; but next (if I may say it; and I wot it is not wrong)-next I thought of our Blessed Lady. There was a great painting in the Hall oratory -by some Spanish painter, they said. Murillo? Yes, sir, that is the name. It looked like Mrs. James Brent, sir. Not an angel, but a woman that could suffer and weep and struggle sore; and, pure and stainless, would still remember she was of us poor humans, and so pity and pray for us.

We had been used to have Mr. Brent come into our houses, and to see him in the poorest cottages and the almshouses, with smiles and cheery words and money; but Mrs. James gave more than that, for she gave herself. I've seen those soft hands bind wounds I shrank from: and that delicate creature-I've seen her kneeling by beds of dying sinners, while her face grew white at what she saw and heard, and yet she praying over 'em, and, what's more, loving 'em, till she made the way for the priest to come. And she laid out dead whom few of us would have touched for hire, and she listened to the stories of the sad and tiresome, and her smile was sunshine, and the very sight of her passing by lifted up our minds to God. Her husband

thwarted her in nothing. What was there to thwart her in? He loved her, and she should do what the would in this work which was her heart's joy.

Then we had been used to see Mr. James in church regular, weekday Mass and Sunday Mass; but Mrs. James was there any time, early mornings and noons and nights. I fancy she loved it better than the stately Hall. After she came, her husband added the great south transept window from Germany, and the organ that people came miles to hear; and he said it was her gift, not his. The window picture is a great Crucifixion and Our Lady standing by. You'll understand better, Mr. Clarkson, ere I finish, what it says to Brentwood folk now.

The first year there was a daughter only; but the next there came a son. After that, for six long years there were no more children, but then another son saw the light. What rejoicings, what bonfires, what clanging of bells, there was! But ere night the clanging changed to tolling and the shouts to tears: for the child died. And when Mrs. Tames came among us again, very white and changed and feeble, we all knew that with Mr. James and Mr. William, we were seeing the last Brent Brothers, whatever our grandchildren might see.

However, she was spared, and Mr. James took heart of such grace as that, and said it would be Brent and Son, which sounded quite as well when one was used to it. And to make himself used to it—or to stifle the disappointment, as I really think—he began the Brent Bank. There had been a Brent Bank here for years past, and to it all Brentwood and half the country round trusted their earnings. Only

a few really rich people had much to do with it, but men in moderate circumstances, young doctors and lawyers with growing families, widows, orphans, seamstresses, the factory people, laborers, thought there was no bank like that. Mr. James' kind spirit showed itself there as elsewhere, and nobody felt himself too insignificant to come there, if only with a penny.

Often and often I sit here and wonder, Mr. Clarkson, why it all was—why God ever let it be—the shame and the sorrow and the suffering that came. I know Mr. James was lavish, but, if he spent much on himself, he spent much on others too; and he made God's house as beautiful as his own. For a time it looked as if God's blessing was on him; for he prospered year by year, and, except for his child's dying and his wife's frail health, his cup of joy seemed running over.

By and by came a year-you may just remember it, sir-a year of very hard times for the whole country. Banks broke, and old houses went by the board, and men were thrown out of work, and there was a cry of distress through all the land. But Brentwood folk hadn't a thought of fear. Still, in that year, from the very first of it, something troubled me. Master was moody now and then; went up to the city oftener; had letters which he did not show to me, who had seen all his business correspondence and his father's for thirty years and more. Sometimes he missed Mass, and presently I noted with a pang that he did not receive the Blessed Sacrament regular as he used. And Mrs. James was pale, and her eyes, that once were as bright and clear as sunshine, grew heavy and dark, and she looked

more and more like the picture in her oratory; but it made one very sad somehow to see the likeness.

The hard times began at midsummer. The Lent after there was a mission of Dominican friars here. I was special busy that week, and kept at work till after midnight. One evening, about eight, Mr. James came hurriedly into the office and asked for the letters. He turned them over, looked blank, then said the half-past eleven mail would surely bring the one he wanted, and he should wait till then and go for it himself. five minutes or so he tried to cast up some accounts; then, too nervous-like to be quiet longer, he said: "I'll go and hear the sermon, Serle. It will serve to fill up the time." And off he went.

The clock struck the hour and the half-hour, and the hour and the half-hour, and I heard the half-past eleven mail come in, and, soon after, Mr. James' step again, but slow now, like one in deep thought. In he came, and I caught a glimpse of his face, pale and stern, with the lips hard set. He shut himself into his private room, and I heard him pacing up and down; then there came a pause, and he strode out again. He seemed very odd to me, but he tried to laugh, as he put down two slips for telegrams on my desk. "Which would you send?" said he. .

One was, "Go on. I consent to all your terms." The other was, "Stop. I will have nothing more to do with it, no matter what happens."

Something told me in my heart that, though he was trying to pass this off in his old way like a joke, my master—my dear master—was in a great strait. I looked up and answered what he had not said at all to get an answer, with words which rose to my lips in spite of myself. Says I: "Send what Mrs. James would want you to send, sir." And then his ruddy, kind face bleached gray like ashes, and he gave a groan, and the next minute he was gone.

Though my work was done for that night, I would not leave the bank; for I thought he might come back. And back he did come, a full hour after, steady and grave and not like my master. For, Mr. Clarkson, the bright boy-look I had loved so, which, with the boynature too, had never seemed to leave him, was all gone out of his face, and I knew surely I never should see it there again. He wrote something quickly, then handed it to me, bidding me send telegrams to the bank trustees as there ordered. The slip which bore my direction bore also the words, with just a pencil-line erasure through them, "Go on. I consent to all your terms." So, for good or for ill, whichever it might be, the other was the one he must have sent.

These telegrams notified the trustees of a most important meeting to which they were summoned, and at that meeting I had, as usual, to be present. Perhaps his colleagues saw no change in him; but I, who had served him long, saw much. O Mr. Clarkson, Mr. Clarkson! whatever you may be-and you are young still-3e honest. For, sir, there's one thing of many terrible to bear, and its got to be borne here or hereafter by them as err from uprightness; and that thing is shame. I'd seen him kneel at the altar that morning, and she beside him, bless her! That's where he got strength to endure the penance he had brought upon himself; else I don't know how he ever could have borne it or have done it.

They sat there about him where they had often sat before, those fifteen country gentlemen, some of whom had been his father's and his uncle's friends, and some his own schoolmates and companions. And he stood up, and first he looked them calm and fearless full in their faces, and then his voice faltered and stopped, and then they all felt that it was indeed something beyond ordinary that was coming.

Don't ask me to tell my master's shame as he told it, without a gloss or an excuse, plain and bald and to the point. I knew and they knew that there was excuse for his loving and lavish nature, but he made none for himself.

Well, there's no hiding what all the world knows now. He had let himself be led away into speculation and—God pity and forgive him!—into fraud, till only ruin or added and greater sin stared him in the face; then, brought face to face with that alternative, he had chosen—just ruin, sir.

There was dead silence for a space, till Sir Jasper Meredith, the oldest man there, and the justest business man I ever met, said gravely: "Do you realize, Mr. Brent, that this implies ruin to others than to you?"

He was not thinking of himself, though this trouble would straiten him sorely; he was thinking, and so was my master, and so was I, of poor men, and lone women, and children and babies, made penniless at a blow; of the works stopped; of hunger and sickness and cold. Mr. James bowed his head; he could not speak.

Then I had to bring out the

books, and we went carefully over them page by page. It was like the Day of Judgment itself to turn over those accounts, and to read letters that had to be read, and to find out, step by step, and in the very presence of the man we had honored and trusted, that he had really fallen from his high place. He quivered under it, body and soul, but answered steadily every question Sir Jasper put to him; spoke in such a way that I was sure he as well as I thought of the last great day, and was answering to One mightier than man. And presently, when they had reached the root of it-well, Mr. Clarkson, it was sin and it was shame, and I dare not call it less before God: yet it was sin which many another man does unblushingly, and had he persisted in it—had he only the night previous sent that message. "Go on "-it was possible and probable that he could have saved him-Yet, if I could have had my choice then or now, I would rather have seen him stand there, disgraced and ruined by his own act and will, than have had him live for another day a hypocrite.

But Sir Jasper said never a word of praise or blame till the whole investigation was ended; listened silently while Mr. James told his plan to sell all he owned in Brentwood, pay what debts he could, and then begin life over again abroad, and work hard and steadily to retrieve his fortunes, that he might pay all and stand with a clear conscience before he died. Then Sir Jasper rose and came to him, put his two hands on Mr. James' shoulders, and looked him straight in the eyes. "James Brent," he said, "I knew your father before you, and your father's father, but I never honored them more, and I

never honored you more, than on this day when you confess to having disgraced your name and theirs, but have had the honesty and manliness to confess it. Disgrace is disgrace; but confession is the beginning of amendment."

That was all. There was no offer of money help; all Sir Jasper could offer would have been but a drop in the ocean of such utter ruin. There was no advice to spare himself before he spared his neighbor; Sir Jasper was too just for that. But after those words I saw my master's eyes grow moist and bright, and a gleam of hope come into his face. My poor master! my poor master! Thank God we cannot see the whole of suffering at the beginning!

The intention was not to let the news get abroad that night. Mr. James went home to tell his wife and children-how terrible that seemed to me !- and I sat busy in the office. It was the spring of the year. Fifteen years ago the coming month he had brought his bride home in the sunshine and the flowers. This afternoon darkened into clouds, and rain came and the east wind. I lighted the lamps early and went to my work again. Presently I heard a sound such as I never heard before—a low growl, or roar, or shout, that wasn't thunder or wind or rain. It grew louder; it was like the tramp of many feet, hurrying fast, and in the direction of the bank. Then cries-a name, short, distinct, repeated again and "Brent! Brent! James again: Brent!"

I went to the window. There they were, half Brentwood and more, clamoring for the sight of the man they trusted above all men. I flung the window up and they saw me.

"Halloo, there, Joseph Ser!e!" cried the leader, a choleric Scot who had not been many years among us. "Where's our master?"

"Not here," says I, with a sinking at my heart.

"He knows," piped a woman's shrill voice; "make him tell us true."

And then the Scot cries again: "Halloo, Joseph Serle, there! Speak us true, mon, or ye'll hang for't. Is our money safe?"

What could I say? Face after face I saw by the glare of torches—faces of neighbors and friends and kin—and not one but was a loser, and few that were not well-nigh ruined. And while I hesitated how to speak again that woman spoke "Where's James Brent? Has he run, the coward?"

That was too much. "He's home," cried I, "where you and all decent folk should be."

"Home! home!" They caught the word and shouted it. "We'll go home too. We'll find James Brent." And the tide turned towards the Hall.

I flew down the back-stairs to the stable, mounted the fleetest horse, and galloped him bareback to Brent Hall; but, fast as I rode, the east wind bore an angry shout behind me, and, if I turned my head, I saw torches flaring, and the ground seemed to tremble with the hurrying tramp of feet.

I don't know how they bore it or how I told 'em. I know I found them together, him and her, and she was as if she had not shed a tear, and her eyes were glowing like stars, bright, and tender, and sad, and glad all at once. I had hardly time to tell the news, when the sound I had dreaded for 'em broke upon us like the rush and the roar of an awful storm. On they came, tramp-

ling over the garden-beds, waving their torchlights, calling one name hoarse and constant-"Brent! Brent! James Brent!"

"My love," he said, bending down to her, "stay while I go to them."

And then she looked at him with a look that was more heavenly than any smile, and said only: " James, my place is by your side, and I will keep it."

He put his hand quick over his eyes like one in great awe, smiled with a smile more sad than tears, then opened the hall door and stood out before the crowd-there where many a man and woman of them had seen him bring his young bride home. And the sudden silence which fell upon them his own voice broke. "My friends," he said, "what would you have of me?"

Straight and keen as a barbed arrow, not from one voice, but from many, the question rose, "Is our money safe?" And after that some one called: "We'll trust your word, master, 'gainst all odds."

I had thought that scene in the bank was like the Judgment Day; cut what was this? He tried to speak, but his lips clave together. Then I saw her draw a little nearer -not to touch him or to speak to him; she did not even look at him, neither at the people, but out into the darkness, and up and far away; and her very body, it seemed to me, was praying.

"Is our money safe?" It was like a yell now, and James Brent made answer: "My friends, I am a

ruined man."

"Is our money safe?" Little children's voices joined in the cry. My God, let Brentwood never hear the like again!

My master held out his hands

like any beggar; then he fell down upon his knees. "I confess to you and to God," he said, "there is not one penny left."

Mr. Clarkson, I am Brentwood born and bred. I love my master, but I love my place and people too. We are a simple folk and a loving folk. It is an awful thing to shake the trust of such. They had deemed their honor and their property for ever safe with this one man, and in an hour and at a word their trust was broken, their scanty all was gone, their earthly hopes were shattered. Mr. Clarkson, sir. it drove them wild.

That day had set on Brent Hall fair and stately; the morrow dawned on blackened ruins. grounds lay waste; the fountains were dry; pictures which nobles had envied had fed the flames; fabrics which would have graced a queen stopped the babbling of the brooks; and in front of Brent Bank hung effigies of the last Brent Brothers, with a halter about the neck of each.

He had planned-my master, my poor master!-to retrieve all. Why could it not be? God knows best, but it is a mystery which I cannot fathom. That night's horror and exposure brought him to the very gates of death; and when he rose up at last, it was as a mere wreck of himself, never to work again. His wife's dowry went to the people whom he had ruined and who had ruined him. They lived until her death, as he lives still, on charity.

And that is all? No, Mr. Clarkson, not quite all. He was brave enough, since he could not win back his honor otherwise, to stay among us and gain a place again in the hearts he had wounded sore. Sometimes I think he teaches us a

better lesson, old, and alone, and poor, than if he had come to build his fallen home once more. I think, sir, we have learned to pity and forgive as we never should have done otherwise, since we have seen him suffering like any one of us; as low down as any one of us.

JAMES BRENT'S VERSION.

He has told you the story, then, my boy, has he? And you are the last of us, and you have my name—James Brent Clarkson. The last? Then I will tell you more than he could tell you. Do not shrink or fancy it will pain me. I would like to let you know all, my boy—not for my sake; but you say you are only half a Catholic, and I would have you learn something of the deep reality of the true faith.

The night I waited for the halfpast eleven train I had been stopped on my way to the bank by a crowd at the church door, and I heard one man say to another: "They're dark times, neighbor—as dark as our land's seen these hundred years." And his mate answered him: "Maybe so, Collins; maybe so. But Brentwood don't feel 'em much. I believe, and so does most folks, that if all other houses fell, and e'en the Bank of England broke, Brent Brothers would stand. It's been honest and true for four generations back, and so 'twull be to the end on't." Then the crowd parted, the men went into the church, and I passed down the street.

"Honest and true for four generations back, and so 'twull be to the end on't." The words haunted me. At last, in desperation, to rid myself of the thought, I went to church also. Going in by a side door, I

found myself in a corner by a confessional, quite sheltered from view. but with the pulpit in plain sight. There, raised high above the heads of the people, the preacher stood, a man of middle age, who looked as if he had been at some time of his life in and of the world: his face that of one who has found it almost a death-struggle to subdue self to the obedience and the folly of the cross. He seemed meant for a ruler among his fellows. I wondered idly what he was doing there in the preacher's frock, speaking to the crowd.

He was telling, simply and plainly, of our Lord's agony in the garden. But simple and plain as were his words, there was something in the face and voice which drew one into sympathetic union with this man, who spoke as if he were literally beholding the load of our sin lying upon the Lord's heart till his sweat of blood started. And when he had painted the scene to us, he paused as hearing the awful cry echo through the stillness that reigned in the crowded church, then bent forward as if his eyes would scan our very hearts, and spoke once more.

I cannot tell you what he said, but before he ended I knew this: my sin cost our Lord's agony; added sin of mine would be added anguish of his. The choice lay before me. When I showed Serle those two despatches, the one "Stop," the other "Go on," I held there what would be my ruin for time or for eternity.

There is a world unseen and mighty; its powers were round me that night like an army. Hitherto I had been deceiving myself with the plea of necessity of others' interests to be considered, of my honor to be sustained. That night

another motive rose before me, but it was of an honor put to dishonor—the Lord of glory bowed down to the earth by shame.

The letter must be answered before morning, so pressing was my need. I decided to go to the telegraph office, and by the time I reached it my mind must be made up. But, in the street, I came face to face with the preacher I had heard that night. The moon was near the full. We two looked straight at each other, passed, then turned as by one impulse, and faced again. They who fight a fight to its end, and conquer, but only with wounds whose scars they must bear to their graves, sometimes gain a great power of reading the souls of those who are fighting a like contest, and know not yet if it will end in victory or defeat. Some fight like mine I felt sure that priest had fought. "What would you have, my brother?" he asked.

"Answers to two questions, father," I replied. "If a man has done wrong to others, and can only repair it by added wrong, shall he disgrace his own good name for ever by avowal, or shall he sin? And if his fall involves the suffering of his innocent wife and children, may he not save himself from shame for their sake? It is a matter which may not wait now for confession even. Answer as best you may, for the love of God."

I fancied that the stern face before me softened and grew pale, and in the momentary stillness I understood that the Dominican was praying. Then he answered, few words and firm, as one who *knew*:

"To choose disgrace is to choose the path our divine Lord chose. To involve our dearest in suffering is to know his anguish whose blessed Mother stood beneath his cross." Then, after one more slight, intense silence, "My brother," he said earnestly, "I do not know your life, but I know my own. To drink the Lord's cup of shame to its dregs—with him—is a blessed thing to do, if he gives a sinner grace to do it."

Tell me a thousand times that you have no faith yourself; that to love God passionately is a dream, a delusion, unworthy of our manly nature; that to choose shame is folly, to choose suffering is a mad mistake-what shame could atone for my sins or give back to the poor the means of which my folly had robbed them? What can your words count with those who have once tasted the bitter sweetness of the Lord's own chalice? Suddenly, standing there, I knew what it means to love God more than houses or lands, wife or children; to have him more real to the soul than they to the heart; to be willing and glad to forsake all for him; to know I had one more chance left to do his will, not Satan's; and to make my choice. Having brought his agony on him, there was nothing more I could do but bear it with him.

My boy, though you came on my invitation, you chose the twilight in which to come to me, that I might hide my shame at meeting you. Such shame died dead in two awful nights and 'days: First, confession before the priest of God; then to colleagues and friends; then to my wife and to my son-oh! that stings yet; then to an angry throng. whose trust I had betrayed, whose hopes I had blasted, whose love and reverence. I had turned to hate and scorn. I have seen my home in ruins, my effigy hung up and hooted at in the public square. my name become a byword, my

race blotted out. I am an old man now, and still they tell my story in Brentwood; each child learns it; strangers hear of it. Yet, if the power were mine to alter these twenty years of humiliation, I would not lose one hour of suffering or shame.

You ask me why? Thirty-five years ago I stood here, the centre and the favorite of this town, and I set myself to work my own will, to gain glory for me and mine. My wife, my name, my home, were my idols. It seemed an innocent ambition, but it was not for God, and it led me into evil work. You told me that since you came of age you have been but once to confession. It is by the light of that sacrament that what seems to you the mystery of my life is read. For a Catholic—whether striving after perfection, or struggling up from sin to lasting penitence—has for pattern the life of Jesus, the doing all in union with him, after his example. What is the sacrament of penance but the bearing of shame, though in the presence of a compassionate priest, with him who, when he could have rescued us at the price of one drop of his most precious blood, chose to die in ignominy, bearing before the world the entire world's disgrace? My boy, if in any way, by the love of our common name, I can influence you, go back to confession. It is the very sacrament for men who would be upright, and loyal, and strong, and true; or who, having fallen, would humbly and bravely bear for Christ's sake the disclosure and the penalty.

My penance—given by God, mark you—was heavy, men think. Was it heavier than my sin? They do not know everything. All my life I had been helped, guarded, upheld; and for such to fall is a deadlier sin than for others. The infinite love of God bore with me and saved me. And as, day by day, like the unremitted lashes of a scourge, suffering fell to my portion, I tell you that a strange, an awful sweetness mingled with the anguish. I knew it was the hand of God that smote me, and that he smote here to spare hereafter.

Oh! do not look at me. Stop! Turn your face away! I thought all such shame was dead, but there are moments when it overwhelms me with its sting. Did I say or dare to think that God loves me? Wait, wait, till I can remember what it means!

Yes, I know now. Through all that night, while the torches glared, and wrathful faces looked curses at me, and lips shouted them, ever through all I saw, as it were, One sinless but reputed with the wicked; stripped of his garments as I of my pride; made a spectacle to angels. and to men; mocked, reviled, scourged, crucified; and through the wild tumult I heard a voice say, as of old to the repentant thief on the cross: "This day thou shalt be with me." And through all my heart was answering to his most Sacred Heart, "I, indeed, justly; for I receive the due reward of my deeds: but this man hath done no. evil." How could I wish to bespared a single pang or lose one hour of shame with him? What part could any Christian take but to suffer with him, having madehim suffer? And when one has. said "with him," one has explained all. But, somehow, people do not always seem to understand.

Understand? Ah! no. It is a story, not of two versions, but of many. Some called James Brent a

fool, and some a madman, and some said he should have saved his honor and his name at all hazards; and some, that he had no right to entail such suffering on his household. But there is one light by which such stories should be read, that is truer than these. When time is gone, and wealth is dust, and earthly honor vanishes like smoke, then, by

the standard of the cross of Christ wealth, and pomp, and pleasure, and business shall be duly tried. Shun humiliation here as we will, there shall be after this the judgment, when the Prince of Glory, who pronounces final sentence, will be he who, while on earth, chose for his portion a life of suffering and a death of shame.

YULE RAPS.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

WE once saw a picture of a wide, undulating snow-landscape, overspread with a pale rosy tint from the west, and we thought it a fancy picture of an Arctic winter. It hung in a pretty room in a Silesian country-house. The weather was lovely, warm but temperate; it was mid-June, and the woods were full of wild strawberries, and the meadows of forget-me-nots. Yet that landscape was simply Silesia in the winter; the same place, six months later, becomes a wilderness of snow. What shall we say of Mecklenburg, then, so much farther to the north of Silesia? But even there winter brings merriment; and as in these snow-bound countries there is less work to be got through in the winter, their people associate the ideas of pleasure and holiday with the cold rather than the warm weather. In Mecklenburg spring, summer, and autumn mean workploughing, sowing, having, harvesting; winter means fun and frolic, peasants' dances, farmers' parties, weddings, christenings, harvesthomes, Christmas, New Year's, and Epiphany presents, gatherings of friends, fireside talk, innocent games, and general merriment.

In a little village in this province the house of Emanuel Köhler was famous for its jollity. Here were old customs well kept up, yet always with decorum and a regard to higher matters. Emanuel was virtually master of the estate of Stelhagen, the absentee owner of which was a gay young officer who never wrote to his agent, except for a new supply of money. Clever and enlightened an agriculturist as old Köhler was, it was sometimes difficult for him to send the required sums, and yet have enough to farm the estate to his satisfaction. In the language of the country, he was called the inspector, and his house, also according to the local custom, was a kind of informal agricultural school. At the time of our story he had four young men under him-who were in all respects like the apprentices of the good old time-and two of his own relatives, his son and his nephew. His only daughter was busy helping her mother, and learning to be as efficient a housekeeper as the young men to be first-rate farmers; and this nucleus of young society, added to the good Köhler's hearty joviality and the known good-cheer always provided by Frau Köhler, naturally made the large, cosey, rambling house a pleasant rendezvous for the neighborhood. The Köhler household was a host in itself, yet it always loved to be reinforced on festive occasions by the good people of the village and farms within ten miles round. So also the children, whether poor or pretty well off, were all welcome at old Emanuel's, and knew the way to the Frau Inspectorin's pantry as well as they knew the path to the church or the school. All the servant-girls in the neighborhood wanted to get a place in this house, but there was scarcely ever a vacancy, unless one of the

dairy-maids or the house-girls married. Frau Köhler and her daughter did all the kitchen work themselves, and the latter, a thoughtful girl, though she was only fifteen, studied books and maps betweenwhiles. But her studies never interfered with the more necessary knowledge that a girl should have when, as Rika,* she has to depend upon herself for everything. the country, in the Mecklenburg of even a very few years ago, everything was home-made, and a supply of things from the large town twenty or thirty miles off was the event of a life-time. Such things came as wedding-gifts; and though fancy things came every Christmas, even they were carefully and sacredly kept as tokens of that miraculous, strange, bewildering world outside, in which people wore their silk dresses every day, and bought everything they wanted at large shops a few steps from their own houses. Frau Köhler often wondered what other women did who had no farm-house to manage, no spinning, or knitting, or cooking, or dairy-work to do; and when her daughter Rika suggested that they probably read and studied, she shrugged her shoulders and said: "Take care, child; women ought to attend to women's work. Studying is a man's business."

The honest soul was a type of many an old-fashioned German house-mother, of whose wisdom it were well that some of our contemporaries could avail themselves; and when Rika gently reminded her of the story of Martha and Mary, she would energetically reply:

"Very well; but take my word for it, child, there was a woman more blessed than that Mary, and one who was nearer yet to her Lord; and we do not hear of her neglecting her house. I love to think of that house at Nazareth as just a model of household cleanliness and comfort. You know, otherwise, it could not have been a fitting place for Him; for though he chose poverty, he must needs have surrounded himself with spotless purity."

And Rika, as humble and docile as she was thoughtful, saw in this reverent and practical surmise a proof that it is not learning that comes nearest to the heart of truth, but that clearer and directer knowledge which God gives to "babes

and sucklings."

This particular Christmas there was much preparation for the family festival. The kitchen was in a ferment for a week, and mighty bakings took place; gingerbread and cake were made, and various confectionery-work was done; for Frau Köhler expected a friend of her own early home to come and stay with her this last week of the year. This was the good old priest who had baptized her daughter; for neither mother nor daughter were natives of Mecklenburg, though the latter had grown up there, and had never, since she was six months old, gone beyond the limits of the large estate which her father administered. Frau Köhler was a Bavarian by birth, and had grieved very much when her Mecklenburg husband had taken her to this northern land, where his position and wages were so good as to make it his duty to abide and bring up his family. But the worthy old creature had done a wonderful deal of good since she had been there, and kept up her faith as steadfastly as ever she had at home. Frederika had been her treasure and her comfort; and between the mother's intense, mediæval firm-

ness of belief, and the child's naturally deep and thoughtful nature, the little farm-maiden had grown up a rare combination of qualities, and a model for the young Catholic womanhood of our stormy times. The old priest whom Frau Köhler had looked up to before her marriage as her best friend, and whom Rika had been taught to revere from her babyhood, had been very sick, and was obliged to leave his parish for a long holiday and rest. His former parishioner was anxious that he should see Christmas kept in the old-fashioned northern style. more characteristic than the Frenchified southern manners would now allow, even in her remote native village. Civilization carries with it the pick-axe and the rule; and when young girls begin to prefer Manchester prints and French bonnets to homespun and straw hats, most of the old customs slip away from their homes.

In the sturdy Mecklenburg of twenty years ago, even after the temporary stir of 1848, things were pretty much as they had been for centuries, and it was Emanuel's pride that his household should be, if needful, the last stronghold of the good old usages. He heartily acquiesced in his wife's invitation to the southern guest, and resolved to have the best Christmas that had been known in the country since he had undertaken the care of the Stellhagen estate. In truth, he lived like a patriarch among his workpeople; his laborers and their families were models of prosperity and content, and the children of all the neighborhood wished he were their grandfather. Indeed, he was godfather to half the village babies born during his stay there.

The sleighs of the country were the people's pride. Some were

plain and strong, because their owners were not rich enough to adorn them, but others were quite a curiosity to the visitor from the south. They partook of the same quaintness as the old yellow family coaches that took the farmers to harvest-homes and weddings before the early snows came on. Lumbering, heavy-wheeled vehicles these were, swinging on high like a cradle tied to a couple of saplings in a storm; capacious as the house-mother's apron-pockets on a baking day; seventy years old at least, barring the numerous patchings and mendings, new lining or new wheel, occasionally vouchsafed to the venerable representative of the family dignity. The sleighs were much gayer and a little less antiquated, because oftener used. and therefore oftener worn out; besides, there were fashions in sleighs even in this remote place-fashions indigenous to the population, each individual of which was capable of some invention when sleighs were in question. On Christmas Eve, long before it grew dark, many of these pretty or curious conveyances clattered up to the farmhouse door. Some were laden with children two rows deep, all wrapped in knitted jackets, blankets, boas, etc., and here and there covered with a fur cap or furred hood; for knitting in this neighborhood supplied all with warm winter wraps, even better than woven or machine-made stuffs do nowadays. There were no single sleighs, no tiny, toy-like things made to display the rich toilet of the occupant and the skill of the fast driver by her side; here all were honest family vehicles, full of rosy faces like Christmas apples; hearty men and women who at threescore were almost as young as

their grand-children on their bridal day; and young men and maidens who were not afraid to dance and move briskly in their plain, loose, home-spun and home-made clothes, nor to fall in love with German downrightness and honest, practical intentions. Most of these sleighs were red, picked out with black, or black liberally sprinkled with red; some were vellow and black, some vellow and blue, and in most the robe and cushions were of corresponding colors. Some of these robes had eagles embroidered in coarse patterns and thick wool, while others were of a pattern something like those used for bed-quilts; and some bore unmistakable witness to the thrift of the house-mother, and were skilfully pieced together out of carpet, curtain, blanket, and dress remnants, the whole bordered with some inexpensive furor two sleighs bore a sort of figurehead—the head of a deer, or a fox, or a hawk-carved and let into the curling part of the front; while one party, who were gazed upon with mingled admiration and disapproval, went so far as to trail after them, for three or four feet behind the sleigh, and sweeping up the snow in their wake, a thick scarlet cloth of gorgeous appearance, but no very valuable texture. This was the doing of a young fellow who had lately been reading one or two romances of chivalry, and been much pleased with the "velvet housings of the horses, sweeping the ground as the knight rode to the king's tournament." His indulgent old mother and admiring sisters had but faintly remonstrated, and this was the consequence. The horses were not iess bedecked than the vehicles. Silver bells hung from their harness and belted their bodies in various places; shining plates of metal and knobs driven into the leather made them as gay as circushorses; while horse-cloths of variegated pattern were rolled up under the feet of their masters, ready for use whenever they stopped on the road.

Emanuel himself had gone to the nearest town at which a stagecoach stopped, to welcome his wife's friend and special guest, and entertained him with a flow of agricultural information and warm eulogy of the country through which they were speeding on their way home. He arrived at Stelhagen before the rush of country visitors, and was triumphantly taken through every part of the well-kept farm, while his meal was being prepared by Rika and the maids. But more than all, Frau Köhler, in her delight, actually made him "free" of the sacred, secret chamber where stood the Christbaum, already laden but unlighted, among its attendant tables and dishes. The old man was as innocently charmed as a seven-year-old child; it reminded him so of his own Christmas-tree in days when the simple customs of Germany were still unimpaired, and when it was the fashion to give only really useful things, with due regard to the condition and needs of the recipients.

"But at the feasts to which my people ask me now," said he, "I see children regaled with a multitude of unwholesome, colored bonbons in boxes that cost quite as much as the contents, and servants given cheap silks or paste jewelry, and the friends or the master and mistress themselves loaded with pretty but useless knick-knacks, gilded toys that cost a great deal and make more show than their use war-

rants. Times are sadly changed, Thekla, even since you were married."

"Well, Herr Pfarrer, I have had little chance, and less wish, to see the change; and up here I think we still live as Noah's sons after they came out of the ark," said good Frau Köhler, with a broad smile at her own wit. As the day wore on, she and Rika left the Pfarrer (curé) to Emanuel's care, and again busied themselves about the serious coming festivity. She flew around, as active as a fat sparrow, with a dusting-cloth under her arm, whisking off with nervous hand every speck of dust on the mantel-piece or among the few books which lay conspicuously on the table in the best room; giving her orders to the nimble maids, welcoming the families of guests, and specially petting the children. Emanuel took the men under his protection, and gave them tobacco and pipes, and talked farming to them, while his own young home-squad whispered in corners of the coming tree and supper.

At last Rika came out from the room where the mystery was going on, and, opening the door wide, let a flood of light into the dark apartment beyond. There was a regular blaze. The large tree stood on a low table, and reached nearly There were up to the ceiling. only lights, colored ribbons, and gilded walnuts hung upon it, but it quite satisfied the expectation of the good folk around it. Round the room were tables and stands of all kinds, crowded together, and barely holding all the dishes apportioned to each member of the party. The guests had secretly brought or sent their mutual presents; one family generally taking charge of its neighbor's gifts, and vice-versa, that

none might suspect the nature of their own. The tree, too, was a joint contribution of the several families; all had sent in tapers and nuts, and this it was that made it so full of bright things and necessitated its being so tall.

On the middle table, under the tree itself, were dishes for the Köhler household, each one having a liberal allowance of apples, nuts, and gingerbread. Besides these, there were parcels, securely tied, laid by the dishes, and labelled with the names of their unconscious owners. Köhler was seized upon by his wife and daughter before any one else was allowed to go forward-for in this old-fashioned neighborhood the head of the house is still considered in the light of an Abraham—and a compact parcel was put into his hands by Rika, while Thekla kissed him with hearty loudness. came the guest, whom Rika led to the prettiest china dish, and presented with a small, tempting-looking packet. Leaving him to open it at his leisure, she joined her young friends, and a good-natured scramble now began, each looking for his own name in some familiar handwriting, finding it, and opening the treasure with the eagerness of a child. It would be impossible to describe every present that thus came to view; but though many pretty and elaborate, none were for mere show. Presently Frau Köhler was seen to take possession of her husband, and, pulling off his coat, made him try on the dressing-gown he had just drawn from his parcel. She turned him round like a doll, and clapped her hands in admiration at the perfect fit; then danced around to the other end of the room, and called out to the maids:

"Lina! Bettchen! it is your

turn now; you have not been for-Those are your dishes where the silver dollars are sticking in the apples." The maids opened their parcels, and each found a bright, soft, warm dress, crimson and black. Then came George. the man who did most of the immediate work round the house, and found a bright red vest with steel buttons in his parcel. Frau Köhler was busy looking at other people's things, when her husband slipped a neat, long packet on her dish, and, as she turned and saw the addition, she uttered an exclamation of joy. Rika helped her to unfold the stiff, rustling thing, when it turned out to be a black silk dress. Not every housewife in those days had one, and her last was nearly worn out. Then the old priest came forward to show the company his Christmas box; and what do you think it was? There was no doubt as to where it came from. It was a set of missalmarkers, and in such taste as was scarcely to be expected in that time and neighborhood. Rika had designed it, and her mother had worked it; but many an anxious debate had there been over it, as the Frau Inspectorin had been at first quite vexed at what she called its plainness. It was composed of five thick gros-grain ribbons, two inches wide and fifteen long. There was a red, a green, a white, a purple, and a black ribbon; and on each was embroidered a mottoon the red and green, in gold; on the white, in red; and on the black and purple, in silver. The letters were German, though the mottoes were in Latin, and each of the five referred to one of these events: our Lord's birth, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and the Coming of the Holy Ghost. At the end

of each ribbon, instead of fringe or tassels, hung a cross of pure silver, into the ring of which the ribbon was loosely gathered. Every one crowded round this novel Christmas gift, and examined it with an admiration equally gratifying to the giver and the receiver. But Emanuel's jolly voice soon broke the spell by saying:

"These fine presents are very delightful to receive, no doubt, and the women-folk would not have been happy without some such thing; but we are all mortal, and I have not forgotten that my guest has feet and hands, and needs warmth and comfort as much as we

of grosser clay."

And with this he thrust a large parcel into the *Pfarrer's* arms. Every one laughed and helped him to open it; every one was curious to see its contents. They were, indeed, of a most substantial and useful kind: a foot-muff of scarlet cloth, lined and bordered with fur, and a pair of huge sealskin gloves.

Scarcely had the parcel been opened when a hum of measured sound was heard outside, and presently a Christmas carol was distinctly audible. Every one knew the words. and many joined in the song before the singers became visible. Then the door opened, and a troop of children came in, dressed in warm white furs and woollen wrappings, and carrying tapers and firbranches in their hands. sang a second carol, quaint and rustic in its words, but skilfully set to anything but archaic music, and then, in honor of their southern guest, they began the song of the evening, a few stanzas from the "Great Hymn" to the Blessed Virgin, by the Minnesinger, Gottfried of Strasburg, the translation of which, according to Kroeger, runs thus:

xxv.

"God thee hath clothed with raiments seven;
On thy pure body, drawn from heaven,
Hath put them even
When thou wast first created.
The first one Chastity is named;
The second is as Virtue famed;
The third is claimed
As Courtesy, well mated;
The fourth dress is Humility;
The fifth is known as Pity;
The sixth one, Faith, clings close to thee;
The seventh, noble Modesty,
Leads gratefully

XXVII.

Thee in the path of duty.

"Thou sun, thou moon, thou star so fair, God took thee from his own side there, Here to prepare

The birth of Christ within thee.
For that his loved Child and thine, Which is our life and life's sunshine,
Our bread and wine,
To stay chaste, he did win thee;
So that sin's thorns could never touch
Thy fruitful virtue's branches.
His burning love for thee did vouch,
He kept thee from all sins that crouch:
A golden couch,
Secured by his love's trenches.

XLVII.

"Rejoice now, thou salvation's throne, That thou gavest birth to Him who won Our cause, thy Son, Our Saviour and our blessing.

XLVIII.

"Rejoice now, O thou sunshine mild,
That on thy blessed breasts there smiled
God's little 'hild—
Its earthly destination.
Rejoice that then drew near to thee
From foreign lands the wise kings three,
Noble and free,
To bring their adoration
To thee and to that blessed Child,
With many a graceful off 'ring.
Rejoice now, that the star beguled
And to that place their pathway smiled
Where, with thy Child,
They worshipped thy sweet suff'ring."

"You are not so utterly unknowing of all gentle and learned pursuits as you would have had me believe," said the *Pfarrer* to Frau Köhler. "It is not every child in Bavaria that could sing so well this Old-World poem, so graceful in its rhyming and so devout in its allusions. Our old XIIth-century poetry, the most national—i.e., peculiar to our country—is too much superseded by noisy modern rhymes or sentimental ballads copied from

foreign models. Have you any unknown scholar among your farmers and agents, who, you told me, made up a hearty but not a learned society here?"

"Well," said Frau Köhler, "there is the school-master, Heldmann, who is always poring over old useless books, but never can have a good dinner unless his friends send it to him, poor man! He is a bachelor, and cannot afford to have a housekeeper. And then there is one of our young gentlemen, who Köhler says is always in the clouds, and who spends all his spare time with Heldmann, while the other boys spend theirs with their pretty, rosy neighbors. By the way, Heldmann is coming to-night; but he said he could not come till late, as he had some important business which would detain him for an hour or two."

"You forget our Rika, mother," said Emanuel, not heeding the last part of his wife's sentence; "she is as wise as any of them, though she says so little. She knows all the old legends and poetry, and more besides, I warrant."

"Rika designed that missal-marker," said the Frau Inspectorin proudly (she had found out, since it had been so admired, that her daughter's instinct had guided her aright in the design).

But Rika, hearing her name mentioned, had slipped away among the white-wrapped children, and was laying their tapers and firbranches away, preparatory to giving them cakes and fruit. This was quite a ceremony, and when they were ready Frau Köhler, handing the large dish of nuts to the *Pfarrer*, begged him to distribute them, while she took charge of the gingerbread and Rika of the apples.

It was funny to see the solemn

expectancy with which the children brought out dishes, mugs, pitchers, etc., in which to receive these Christmas gifts. Some of the girls held out their aprons, as more convenient and capacious receptacles than anything else they could lay hands on. One boy brought a large birthday cup, and another a wooden milk-bowl; another a small churn, while a fourth had carried off his father's peck-measure, and a fifth calmly handed up a corn-sack, which he evidently expected to get filled to the brim. As Frau Köhler came to one of the children, she said:

"Fritz, I saw you in the orchard last autumn stealing our apples. Now, naughty boys must not expect to get apples at Christmas if they take them at other times; so, Rika, don't give him any. He shall have one piece of gingerbread, though." A piteous disclaimer met this sentence; but the Pfarrer thrust a double quantity of nuts into the culprit's basket, and passed on. Then once again Frau Köhler stopped and said: "Johann, didn't I see you fighting with another boy in the churchyard two weeks ago, and told you that Santa Claus would forget you when he came to fill the stockings on Christmas night? I shall not give you any gingerbread."

"Franz knows we made it up again," whined the boy, and Franz, with a roguish look, peeped out from his place in the row and said: "Yes, we did, Frau Inspectorin"; so both got their gingerbread. At last, this distribution being over, the children, laden with their gifts, went home to their own various firesides, not without many thanks to the "stranger within the gates" and his parting reminder, as he showed them the stars:

"Look up at God's own Christmas-tree, lighted up with thousands of tapers, children, and at the smooth, white snow spread over the fields. That is the white tablecloth which he has spread for the beautiful gifts which spring, and summer, and autumn are going to bring you, all in his own good time."*

Then came another batch of visitors—the old, sick, and infirm people of the village; the spinningwomen, the broom-tyers, the wooden bowl and spoon carvers, and the makers of wooden shoes; and some who could no longer work, but had been faithful and industrious in their time. They had something of the old costume on: the men wore blue varn stockings and stout gray knee-breeches (they had left their top-boots outside; for the snow was deep and soft, and they needed them all the winter and through most of the spring); and the women had large nodding caps and black silk handkerchiefs folded across their bosoms. Each of these old people got a large loaf of plain cake and some good stout flannel: and these things, according to the local etiquette, the inspector himself delivered to them as the representative of his young master. This distribution was an old custom on the Stelhagen estate, and, though the present owner was careless enough in many things, he wished this usage to be always kept up. Even if he had not, it is not likely that as long as Köhler was inspector the old people would not have been able to rely on the customary Christmas gift. this some bustle occurred, and two or three people went and stationed themselves outside the door.

^{*} From the German.

Presently the expectant company within were startled by a loud rap, and the door flew open, a parcel was flung in, and a voice cried out:

"Yule rap!"

This was a pair of slippers for the inspector. No one knew where they came from; no one had sent them. Yule raps are supposed to be magical, impersonal causes of tangible effects; so every one looked innocent and astonished, as became good Mecklenburgers under Christmas circumstances.

"Yule rap!" again, and the door opened a second time; a smoking-cap, embroidered with his initials, was evolved out of a cumbrous packet by one of the young apprentices, and scarcely had he put it on than another thundering knock sounded on the door.

"Yule rap!" was shouted again, and in flew a heavy package. It was a book, with illustrations of travel scenes in the East, and was directed to Rika.

"Yule rap!"

This time it was only a little square envelope, with a ticket referring Frau Köhler to another ticket up in the bureau drawer in her bed-room; but when one of the boys found it, that referred again to another ticket in the cellar; and when another boy brought this to light, it mysteriously referred her to her husband's pocket. Here, at last, the hidden thing was revealed—an embroidered collar, and a pair of large cuffs to match. Köhler had no idea what sprite had put it there, so he said.

"Yule rap!" and this time it was for the guest—a black velvet skull-cap, warm and clinging. Then came various things, all heralded by the same warning cry of "Yule ras!" and a knock at the door, generally in George's strong voice.

The two maids got the packages ready, and peeped in at the kevhole to see when it was time to vary the sensation by throwing in another present. Again, a breakfastbell came rolling in, ringing as it bounded on, with just a few bands of soft stuff and silver paper muffling its sound. Once a large meerschaum pipe was laid gently at the threshold of the door, and one of the apprentices fetched it as carefully. Then a violin was pushed through the half-open door, and the eager face of the one for whom it was intended peeped anxiously over his neighbor's shoulder, wondering if any one else were the happy destined one, and as much surprised as delighted when he found it was himself. That violin has since been heard in many a large and populous town, and, though its owner did not become as worldknown as Paganini or Sivori, he did not love his art less faithfully and exclusively. We cannot enumerate all the gifts which Yule brought round this year; but before the evening was over, a different voice cried out the magic words, "Yule rap!" and the door being slightly opened and quickly closed again, a tiny, white, silky dog stood trembling on the carpet. Rika jumped up and ran to take it in her arms; then pulling open the door, "Herr Heldmann! Herr Heldmann!" she cried. "I know it is you!"

The schoolmaster came forward, his rough face glowing with the cold through which he had just come.

"I promised you a dog, Rika," he said rather awkwardly, "but they would not let me have it till this very day, and I had no time to go for it but this evening. I kept it under my coat all the time; so it is quite warm. It is only two months old."

Rika was in ecstasies. She declared this was worth all her Christmas presents, and then rewarded Herr Heldmann by telling him how well the children had done their part, and how delightfully surprised the Pfarrer had been. The two men were soon in a deep conversation on subjects dear and familiar to both, and the company gradually dissolved again into little knots and groups. Many took their leave, as their homes were distant and they did not wish to be too late; but for all an informal supper was laid in the vast kitchen, and by degrees most of the good things on the table were sensibly diminished. The host's wife and daughter, and the Herr Pfarrer, with half a dozen others and a few children, did not leave the Christmas-tree, whose tapers were constantly attended to and replaced when necessary. Other "Christmas candles" were also lighted-tall columns of yellow wax, made on purpose for this occasion. As the household and its inmates were left to themselves, the children began asking for their accustomed treat-the stories that all children have been fond of since the world began. No land is so rich in the romance of childhood as Germany, both north and south. There everything is personified, and as an English writer lately said, wonderful histories are connected with the fir-trees in the forests, the beloved and venerated Christbaum. "Though it be yet summer, the child sees in fancy the beautiful Weihnachtsbaum, adorned sparkling things as the Gospel is adorned with promises and hopes; rich in gifts as the three kings were rich; pointing to heaven as the angel pointed; bright as those very heavens were bright with silverwinged messengers; crowned with

gold as the Word was crowned; odorous like the frankincense; sparkling like the star; spreading forth its arms, full of peace and good-will on every side, holding out gifts and promises for all."

Weihnacht, the blessed, the hallowed, the consecrated night, is the child-paradise of Germany. That land of beautiful family festivals has given Christmas a double significance, and merged into its memories all the graceful, shadowy legends of the dead mythology of the Fatherland. The German child is reared in the midst of fairy-tales, which are only truths translated into child-language. Besides the old standard ones, every neighborhood has its own local tales, every family its own new-born additions or in-Every young mother, ventions. herself but a step removed from childhood, with all her tender imaginations still stirring, and her child-days lifted into greater beauty because they are but just left behind, makes new stories for her little ones, and finds in every flower a new fairy, in every brook a new voice.

And yet the old tales still charm the little ones, and the yearly coming of King Winter brings the old, worn stories round again. So Emanuel Köhler told the fairy-tale which the children had listened to every Christmas with ever-new delight, about the journey of King Winter from his kingdom at the North Pole, and how he put on his crown with tall spikes of icicles, and wrapped himself in his wide snowmantle, which to him is as precious and as warm as ermine.

"And now," said the host, "there is some one here who can tell you a far more beautiful story than mine. Some One, greater than the Winter-King, comes too every year—a snow-Child, the white Christ whom out

ancestors, the old Norse and Teutonic warriors, learned to see and adore, where they had only seen and worshipped the God of War and the God of Thunder before. Ask him to tell you a story."

And the old, white-haired Pfarrer stroked the head of the child nearest to him, as the little one looked shyly up into his face, mutely endorsing Emanuel's appeal. He told them that they must already know the story of the first Christmas night, and so he would only tell them how the news that the angels told the shepherds on the hills came long centuries after to others as pure-minded as the shepherds, and by means almost as wonderful. He repeated to them from memory the words of an English prose-poet, which he said he had loved ever since he came across them, and which made the picture he best loved to talk on at Christmas-time: "That little infant frame, white as a snow-drop on the lap of winter, light almost as a snow-flake on the chill night air, smooth as the cushioned drift of snow which the wind has lightly strewn outside the walls of Bethlehem, is at this moment holding within itself, as if it were of adamantine rock, the fires of the beatific light. . . . The little white lily is blooming below the greater one; an offshoot of its stem, and a faithful copy, leaf for leaf, petal for petal, white for white, powdered with the same golden dust, meeting the morning with the same fragrance, which is like no other than their own!" *

There was a more marvellous tale than any they had heard about talking-flowers. The *Christhind* was a flower, and his blessed Mother was a flower—holy lilies in the garden of God, blossoming rods like Aaron's, fruitful roots, stately cedars, and fruit-giving palmtrees. It was a very happy thing to know and feel all this, as we do: but many millions of men know nothing of it, and centuries ago even our forefathers in these forests knew nothing of it. "But," he continued, "there was a distant island, where men of our race lived. which did not receive the faith till long after Germany and France and Britain were Christian, and even had cathedrals and cloisters and schools in abundance. It was two hundred years after Charlemagne, who was a Frankish, and therefore a German, sovereign, founded the Palatine schools and conferred with the learned English monk, Alcuin. This distant, pagan island was Iceland. The Norsemen there were a wild, fierce, warlike people, free from any foreign government, and just the kind of heroes that their old mythology represented them as becoming in their future, disembodied life. They had their scalds, or saga-men, their bards, who were both poets and historians, who kept up their spirit by singing wild songs about their ancestors and the battles they had won. They were all pagans, and thought the forgiveness of injuries very mean. Well, one day, the eve of Yule-tide, when it was terribly cold and cheerless, an old scald sat in his rough hut, with a flickering light before him, chanting one of his wild, heathen songs, and his daughter, a beautiful girl, sat at the plank table near him, busy with some woman's work. During an interval of his song she raised her eves and said to him:

"'Father, there must be something beyond all that—something greater and nobler.'

^{*} Father Faber's Bethlehem.

"'Why, child,' said the old man, with a kind of impatient wonder, 'why should you think so? Many things different there may be, just as there are different kinds of men. and different kinds of beasts, and different kinds of plants; some for mastery and some for thraldom; some for the chase, and some for the kitchen or the plough; some for incantations and sacrifices, and some for common food. But anything nobler than our history there could not be; and as for our religion, if there were anything different, or even better, it would not suit our people, and so would be no concern of ours.'

"'But if it were true, father, and ours not true, what then?'

"'Why ask the question, child? What was good enough for the wise and brave Northmen who fled here that they might be free to fight and worship according to their fancy, is good enough for their descendants.'

" 'But you know yourself, father,' persisted the maiden, 'that those whom our poetical traditions call gods were men, heroes and patriots who taught our forefathers various arts, and guided them safely across deserts and through forests in their long, long migration-but still only men. Our chieftains of to-day might as well become gods to our great-grandchildren, if the old leaders have become so to us. Wise as they were, they could not command the frozen seas to open a way for their ships, nor make the sun rise earlier in the long winter, nor compel the cutting ice-wind to cease. If they could not do such things, they must have been very far from gods.'

"'It is true,' said the old man, that those great chieftains were, in the dim ages we can scarcely

count back to, men like us; but the gods who taught them those very arts took them up to live with them as long as their own heaven might last, and made them equal to themselves. You know even Paradise itself is to come to an end some day.'

"'So our legends say, father; but that, too, makes it seem as if these gods were only another order of mortal beings, stronger but not better than we are, and hiding from us the true, changeless heaven far above them. For surely that which changes cannot be divine. then our legends say that evil is to triumph when heaven and earth come to an end. True, they say there will be a renewal of all things after that, and that, no doubt, means that good will be uppermost; very likely all the things spoken of in our Eddas are only signs of other things which we could not understand.

"The daughter continued these questionings and speculations, the scald answering them as best he could.

"He had listened with evident admiration and approval to her impassioned speech, but he was willing to test her faith in her own womanhood to the utmost. She now seemed wrapt in her own thoughts, but after a short pause said:

"'It would not be another's inspiration in which I should believe; it would be a message from Him who has put this belief already into my heart. Some One greater than all has spoken to my inmost heart, and I am ready to believe; but the messenger that is to put it into words and tell me what to do has not come.'

"There was a silence, and the wind and the sea roared without. The old man shaded the flick-

ering light with his hand, and gazed at his daughter, who was sitting with her hands clasped in her lap. He thought that she herself must have received some divine illumination: for the Norsemen believed in the prophetic gifts of some of their women. His own mind, more cultivated than that of the warrior's. saw through the symbolic character of many of the very myths he sang, and tended vaguely to belief in a higher and hidden circle of things infinite, true, and eternal. then the northern mind was naturally simple, not prone to metaphysical distinctions, not analytical and subtle, dividing as with the sword that pierceth between soul and spirit; and the old man saw no use in raising theological problems for which he could offer no rational solution, save through the dreams of a young girl. Presently the old man rose, shaking off his meditations, and said:

"'It is time for me to go to the Yule-night festival, and I shall have a stormy trudge of it to the castle. I must leave you alone here till to-morrow night. But, my child, I know that there is safety for the scald's daughter wherever she may be; the very sea would not hurt her, and the wildest men would kneel before her; so farewell, and a father's blessing be upon you.'

"His daughter rose and fetched his cloak and staff, wrapped the former around him, and fastened it over the rude musical instrument that answered the purpose of lyre and harp; but I am not very learned in such things, and cannot tell you exactly what it was. The young girl stood long on the threshold of the hut, shading the light, and looking out after her father into the darkness. The wind was

sharp and icy, and blew from the frozen sea. As she held the light, she thought she heard a cry come from the direction of the sea. lingered before closing the door, although the wind was very chill; for the cry seemed repeated, and she thought it was a human voice calling. A moment's reflection told her it could not be so; for the whole sea was frozen for miles outward, and no boat or wreck could come so near land. She sat down again to her work, and mused on the conversation she had held with her father. He had studied their national books all his life, and she was not yet twenty. He must know best. Was she likely to be right? She had little experience of the way in which the old system worked: only her own dreams and fancies showed her any other possibility; and vet-she could not shake off the thought: she thirsted for another revelation. The far-off, unknown God-head must have some means of communicating with men; why should he not speak to her, who so passionately and blindly longed for a message, a command, from him?

"The cry from the sea sounded Surely, this time there could be no mistake; the voice was human, and it had come nearer since she had left the door. took up the light again, and went outside, shouting as loud as she could in return. She was answered, and a strange awe came upon her as she heard this cry. Was it that of a man or a spirit? The latter supposition seemed to her unsophisticated mind quite as likely as the former, but it did not frighten her. as it would most of her countrywomen. She went in again, wrapped a thick fur cloak around her, and, taking another on her arm, sallied out once more with another stronger light. It was barely possible to keep the resinous torch alight, and she looked anxiously out towards the sea, to try and catch some glimpse of a human figure. The cries came again at intervals: but she knew that in the clear air a seemingly near sound might vet be far distant. She had to walk briskly up and down the shore, in the beaten path between walls of snow, to keep herself warm, and occasionally she lifted the flaring torch and waved it as a signal. She could do no more, but she longed to see her unknown visitor, and to go out to meet him on the frozen waters. Was it some wrecked sailor, who had clambered from icefloe to ice-floe, in the desperate hope of reaching land before he died of cold and hunger, or some unearthly messenger from an invisible world? If he were a mere man, from what coast could be have drifted. No Icelander would be out at this time and place; it was Yuletide, and there were no wandering boats out among the ice-cliffs and At last she thought she floes. could discern a shadowy form, blacker than the surrounding darkness, but surely no human form; it was like a moving cross, one upright shape, and one laid across near the top, and both dark and compact. But the cry was repeated, though in a more assured and joyful tone, and the maiden waited with bated breath, wondering what this marvel could A field of unbroken ice stretched between her and the advancing figure, which now hastened its steps, and came on like a swiftsailing bird, cleaving the darkness. She thought she could distinguish a human face above the junction of the two arms of the cross, and she held up the light, still uncertain what kind of visitant this approaching form might be. At last it flashed upon her that it was a man bearing a child. But why so rigid? Why did he not hug him close to his bosom to keep him warm, to keep him alive? Was the child dead? And a shuddering awe came upon her, as she thought of its dead white face upturned to heaven, and of the faithful man who had not forsaken it, or left it to the seals and wolves on the ice, or buried it in the chill waters beneath the ice-floes. What a cold it must have struck to the heart of the man carrying it; how his hands must be well-nigh frozen in support-

ing this strange burden!

"She hardly knew whether she was still imagining what might be, or witnessing real movements, when the figure came straight up to her, and, stooping, laid the child at her feet. She lowered the torch, and, as the glare fell on the little face. she saw that it was no breathing one; the man had sunk down beside it, hardly able to stir, now the supreme effort was over and his end was accomplished. She dropped the cloak she held over the little body, and caught up a handful of snow, wherewith she energetically rubbed the face and hands of the stranger, then half dragged, half supported him to the door of the hut. He had only spoken once, just as he dropped at her feet, but she did not understand him: he spoke in a foreign tongue. Once more she went out and brought in the stiffened, frozen body of the child, which she laid on a fur robe just outside the hut; for it was warm within the small, confined dwelling. It was an hour before the stranger's eye told her that her simple, quick remedies had succeeded. He was not very tall, but immensely strong and powerful, and there was a fire in his dark gray eye that gave the clew to his strange, weird pilgrimage over the ice-floes. His hair was dark brown, with a reddish tinge, but already mixed with a few gray streaks; it had been shorn close to his head some time since, as appeared from its irregular growth at present. Beneath his cloak he wore a long black robe, with a leathern girdle round the waist. The child was very beautiful, even in death; his eyes were closed, but his black, curling hair hung round his neck, and the lips had a sweet though somewhat proud outline. scald's daughter set some simple food before her silent guest, and made him a sign to eat. He was evidently very hungry, but before he began he moved his lips and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, lips, and breast. She asked him in her own language what that ceremony meant, not hoping to make him understand her speech, but trusting to her inquiring looks for some explanatory sign that she might interpret as best she could to herself. To her surprise, he answered in a few, slow, labored words, not in Icelandic to be sure, but in some dialect akin to it; for she could make out the meaning. It was, in fact, the Norse dialect that was spoken in the Orkney Islands, but she did not know that. As he spoke, her guest pointed upwards, and she knew that he referred to God. A great longing came into her heart, and she asked again if his God were the same the Icelanders worshipped. He shook his head, and she eagerly questioned farther, but grew so voluble that he could not follow her, and the conversation ceased. Then the stranger rose and went out to the little corpse, which he addressed in impassioned terms in his own language, making over it the same sign that had drawn the maiden's attention before. He then described to her-mostly in pantomime, and with a few Norse words to help him on, and a few slowly-pronounced questions on her part-how the boy and he had been in a boat that was wrecked many days' journey from their own country, and how he had carried him and fed him for three or four days, and then seen him die in his arms. The boy was the only son of a great chief, and he was taking him to his uncle in the North of Scotland. His own country was south of Scotland, a large island like Iceland, but green and beautiful, and there was no ice there.

"The girl made him understand that she was alone for a day or two, but when her father came back he would help him. He evidently understood her better than she did him.

"The next morning, when she again set food before him, she imitated his sign of the cross, and said she wished to believe in the true God; and if his God were the true one, she would believe in him. She looked so earnest and anxious that he again began to try to explain; but the few words he could command, though they sufficed to hint at his worldly adventures, and made clear to her that he had been wrecked, were scarcely adequate to tell her of the new religion shelonged to understand.

"But at noon that day another guest and traveller passed by the scald's dwelling. He was hurrying to the same castle where the girl's father had gone in his capacity of minstrel, but a violent snow-storm.

had come on that morning, and he had lost his way. He stopped a moment to refresh himself, and noticed the stranger. He was himself known as a great traveller, and the figure in the coarse black robe seemed not unfamiliar to him. He addressed the stranger in the latter's language, guessing him at once to be an Irish monk. He said he had seen such men in the Scottish islands, where he had been stormdriven with his ship two years ago. and he had picked up a little of their speech. When the maiden discovered that in this stray guest she had found an interpreter, she pressed him, implored him, almost commanded him, to stay.

"'I must ask him the questions my father could not solve yesterday,' she said; 'and my father's friend will not refuse to speak in my name, for I believe that the unknown God has answered my prayer in sending this holy man over the sea to my very feet.' And she told him how the stranger had come to her, out of the darkness, in the shape of a cross—the same sign he made to propitiate his

God.

"'Ask him to tell us what he believes,' she said impetuously; and the interpreter, compelled by some instinct that he could not resist,

began his office willingly.

"'Tell him,' she said, 'that yesterday, before he came, I was all day thinking that the high, true, unknown God had a message for me, and a truer faith to teach me, because he had put into my heart a longing for something higher than what our books and songs have taught us. And tell him that I believe God sent him in answer to my doubts and prayers.'

"The traveller faithfully translated all this. The monk's face glowed as he replied, in his own language, which he used with the grace and skill of a poet:

"'Tell the maiden that she is right: the true God did send me. and now I know why such things happened to me; why I was wrecked with my lord's only son, a precious freight, a sacred deposit, which the Lord of lords has now taken upon himself to account for to the earthly father, bereaved of his one hope. But God sent me here because to this pure-hearted virgin I was to explain the faith he had already put into her heart. It is not I who bring her the true faith, but God himself who has spoken to her and inclined her to believe: me he has sent to put this message into practical form. Tell her that this is the birthday of the Lord, and that a thousand years ago, almost at the same hour when I set my dead burden at her feet, a living Child, God's own Child, lay at the feet of a pure Virgin in a little village far away in the land of the rising sun. And as this maiden's torch which I saw over the wild, frozen sea, and followed, was an emblem of the faith that dwelt already in her heart, so, too, a marvellous star led three wise men, the scalds of the East, to where this Child lay, and the star was the emblem of their firm faith, which led them to cross rivers and deserts to reach the And tell her that the way in which this wonderful birth was celebrated was by a song which held all the essence of truth in it: "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good-will.""

"All this the interpreter told the maiden, and both marvelled at it. The stranger told them more and more of that wonderful tale, so familiar to us, but which once sounded to our warlike forefathers like

the feolishness of babes and sucklings, or at most like some Eastern myth good enough for philosophers to wrangle over, but unfit for sturdy men of the forest. To the Icelandic maiden it seemed but the fulfilment of her own dreams: and as she listened to the story of the Child. grown to be a wise but obedient Boy, and then a wandering, suffering Man, her soul seemed to drink in the hidden grandeur of the relation, to pierce beyond the human stumbling-blocks which confronted the wise and learned of other lands. and go at once to the heart of the great mystery of love, personified in the Man-God. All the rest seemed to her to be the fitting garment of the central mystery, the crown of leaves growing from the fruitful trunk of this one doctrine. All day long the three sat together, the two Icelanders hanging on the words of the stranger; and so the scald found them on his return. He, too, wanted to know the news which the monk had brought; for he said he had always believed that behind their national songs and hymns lay something greater, but perhaps not expedient for Norsemen to know. He shook his head sadly when he learned the monk's precepts of love, peace, mercy, and forgiveness, and said he feared his countrymen would not understand that, but for his part it was not uncongenial to him. As the weather was such that no vessel could put to sea before the ice broke up, he constrained the monk to stay the rest of the winter with him, and in the spring promised to go over with him to the nearest Scottish coast, and carry the body of his little charge to the uncle to whom he had been on his way when he was wrecked.

. "Before the New Year began,

the monk baptized the first Iceland. ic convert, the daughter of the scald, and gave her the name of the Mother of the Babe of Bethlehem, Mary. Many others heard of the new religion before he left, but that does not belong to my story. The new convert and her father accompanied him to Scotland, and were present at the burial of the Irish chieftain's son at the castle of his Scottish uncle. The latter's son married the Norse maiden, but she never ceased to lament that it had not been given to her to convert many of her own countrymen, or at least shed her blood for her new All her life long she helped to send missionaries to Iceland; and when her son grew up to manhood, the palm she coveted was awarded to him, for he went to his mother's native country, founded a monastery there, labored among the people, converted many, and taught reading and the arts of peace as well as the faith to his pupils; became abbot of the monastery, and was finally martyred on the steps of the altar by a horde of savage heathen Norsemen.

"This is the best Christmas story I know, children," concluded the Herr Pfarrer; "and you, Rika, I can wish you no better model than the fair maiden of Iceland."

It was nearly midnight when the old priest finished his tale, and Frau Köhler, rising, and thanking him cordially for this unwonted addition to ordinary Christmas stories, led him to a door which had been locked till now. It opened into a room decked as a chapel, with an altar at the end, which was now decorated with evergreens. A few chairs and benches were ranged before it, and on a table at the side was everything in readiness for saying Mass.

"It is long since I have heard a midnight Mass," said the good hostess, growing suddenly grave and reverential in her manner, "and my Rika never has; and you know, Herr Pfarrer, I told you I had a greater surprise in store for you yet, after all the local customs in which you were so much interested."

So the beautiful Midnight Mass was said in the Mecklenburg inspector's farm-house, and a more impressive one Frau Köhler had never heard in any southern cathedral; for though there was no music and no pomp, there brooded over the little congregation a spirit of reverence and peace, which comes in full perfection only through a deep silence. The hostess and her daughter received Communion together, and the attentive household could not help thinking of the beautiful

Icelandic convert when she came back from the altar, her hands folded over her breast, and her long, fair hair plaited in two plain, thick tresses.

Herr Heldmann had stayed too, and from that day he never ceased his study of theological problems and his correspondence with the Herr Pfarrer, till he became a Catholic, and was married to Rika in this same little chapel-room a year later by the same kind old priest. One of the young apprentices of Emanuel Köhler had been his secret rival; but notwithstanding that Heldmann was ungainly, shy, and twice her age, Rika decidedly thought that she had the best of the bargain.

And it was true; he had a heart of gold, and she made him a model

wife.

MONSIEUR GOMBARD'S MISTAKE.

M. GOMBARD was a short, stout, pompous man, with a flat nose, and sharp gray eyes that did their very best to look fierce through a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles. succeeded in this attempt with very young culprits and with the female prisoners who appeared before M. Gombard in his official capacity of mayor of the town of Loisel; they succeeded in a lesser degree with functionaries, such as clerks and policemen, who were to a certain extent under the official eye of the mayor; but with the general, independent public the attempt at ferocity was a failure. M. Gombard passed for being a good man, a man with high principles, an unflinching sense of duty, and a genuine respect for law, but also a man whose heart was as dry as a last year's nut. He was fifty years of age, and it had never been said, even as a joke, that M. Gombard had had a "sentiment"; it had never entered into the imagination of anybody who knew him to suggest that he might have a sentiment, or even that he might marry some day. He was looked upon by his fellow-townsmen as a trusty, intelligent machine—a machine that never got out of order, that was always ready when wanted, that would be seriously missed if it were removed. He settled their differences and saved them many a costly lawsuit; for M. Gombard had studied the law, and understood its practical application better than any lawver in Loisel; he made marriages, and drew out wills, and dispensed advice to young and old with the wisdom of Solomon and the stoical

impartiality of Brutus. Everybody trusted him; they knew that if their case was a good case, he would decide it in their favor; if it was a bad case, he would give it against them: no man could buy him, no man could frighten him. Antoine Grimoire, the biggest bully in all the country round -even Antoine Grimoire shook in his shoes when one day a suit in which he was defendant was sent up before M. Gombard. M. Gombard gave judgment against him: and this was more than the united magistrates in Loisel would have dared do, for Antoine would have "licked them" within an inch of their lives, if they had tried it: but he never said boo when M. Gombard pronounced the plaintiff an injured man, and ordered the defendant to pay him one hundred and fifty-three francs, ten sous, and three centimes damages. Everybody in the place held their breath when this sentence went forth. They fully expected Antoine to fly at the audacious judge, and break every bone in his body on the spot; but Antoine coolly nodded, and said civilly, "C'est bon, Monsieur le Maire," and walked off. People made sure he was bent on some terrible vengeance, and that he would never pay a sou of the damages; but he deceived them by paying. This incident added fresh lustre to the prestige of M. Gombard, whose word henceforth was counted as good as, and better than, law, since even Antoine Grimoire gave in to it, which was more than he had ever been known to do to the law.

M. Gombard had some pressing

business on hand just now; for he had left Loisel before daybreak in a post-chaise, and never once pulled ap, except when the wheels came off and went spinning right and left into the ditch on either side, and sent him bumping on over the snow in the disabled vehicle, till at last the horses stopped and M. Gombard got out, jumped on to the back of the leader, and rode on into Cabicol. There he is now, his wig awry and pulled very low over his forehead, but otherwise looking none the worse for his adventurous ride, as he walks up and down the best room in the *Jacques Bonhomme*, the principal inn of Cabicol.

"You said I could have a postchaise?" said M. Gombard to the waiter, who fussed about, on hospit-

able cares intent.

"I did, monsieur."

"And it is in good condition, you say?"

"Excellent, monsieur. It would take you from Cabicol to Paris

without starting a nail."

"Good," observed M. Gombard, sitting down and casting a glance that was unmistakably ferocious on the savory omelet. "I can count on a stout pair of horses?" he continued, helping himself with the haste of a ravenous man.

"Horses?" repeated the waiter blandly. "Monsieur said nothing about horses."

M. Gombard dropped his knife and fork with a clatter, and looked round at the man.

"What use can the chaise be to me without horses?" he said. "Does it go by steam, or do you expect me to carry it on my head?"

"Assuredly not, monsieur; that would be of the last impossibility," replied the waiter demurely.

"The aborigines of Cabicol are idiots, apparently," observed M.

Gombard, still looking straight at the man, but with a broad, speculative stare, as if he had been a curious stone or an unknown variety of dog.

"Yes, monsieur," said the waiter, with ready assent. If a traveller had declared the aborigines of Cabicol to be buffaloes, he would have assented just as readily; he did not care a dry pea for the aborigines, whoever they might be; he did not know them even by sight, so why should he stand up for them? Besides, every traveller represented a tip, and he was not a man to quarrel with his bread and butter.

"What's to be done?" said M. Gombard. "I must have horses;

where am I to get them?"

"I doubt that there is a horse in the town to-day which can be placed at monsieur's disposal. This is the grand market day at Luxort, and everybody is gone there, and tomorrow the beasts will be too tired to start for a fresh journey; but on Friday I dare say monsieur could find a pair, if he does not mind waiting till then."

"There is nothing at the present moment I should mind much more, nothing that could be more disagreeable to me," said M. Gom-

bard.

"We would do our best to make monsieur's delay agreeable," said the waiter; "the beds of the Facques Bonhomme are celebrated; the food is excellent and the cooking of the best; the landlord cuts himself into little pieces for his guests."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated M.

Gombard.

"It is a figure of speech, monsieur, a figure of rhetoric," explained the waiter, who began to heap up blocks of wood on the hearth, as if he were preparing a funeral pyre for his unwilling guest.

"Tell the landlord I want to speak to him," said M. Gombard.

Before he had finished his meal the landlord knocked at the door. M Gombard said "Come in," and the landlord entered. He was a solemn, melancholy-looking man, who spoke in a sepulchral voice, and seemed continually struggling to withhold his tears. He loved his inn, but the weight of responsibility it laid upon him was more than he could bear with a smiling countenance. Every traveller who slept beneath his roof was, for the time being, an object of the tenderest interest to him; it was no exaggeration to say, with the rhetorical waiter, that he cut himself into little pieces for each one of them. He made out imaginary histories of them, which he related afterwards for the entertainment of their successors. He was guided as to the facts of each subject by the peculiar make and fashion of their physiognomies; but he drew his inspiration chiefly from their noses: if the traveller wore his beard long and his nose turned up, he was set down as a philosopher travelling in the pursuit of knowledge; if he wore his beard cropped and his nose hooked, he was a banker whose financial genius and fabulous wealth were a source of terror to the money-markets of Europe; if he carried his nose flat against his face and wore a wig and spectacles, he was a desperate criminal with a huge price on his head, and the police scouring the country in pursuit of him; but he was safe beneath the roof of the Facques Bonhomme, for his host would have sworn with the patriot bard: "I know not, I care not, if guilt's in that heart; I but know that I'll hide thee, whatever thou art!" All the pearls of Golconda, all the gold of

California, would not have bribed him into delivering up a man who enjoyed his hospitality. Many and thrilling were the tales he had to tell of these sinister guests, their hair-breadth escapes, and the silent but, to him, distinctly manifest rage of their baffled pursuers. This life of secret care and harrowing emotions had done its work on the landlord; you saw at a glance that his was a heavily-laden spirit, and that pale "melancholy had marked him for her own. bowed low, and in a voice of deep feeling inquired how he could serve M. Gombard.

"By getting me a pair of good post-horses," replied his guest. "It is of the utmost importance that I reach X—— before five o'clock to-morrow afternoon, and your people say I have no chance of finding horses until Friday."

The landlord stifled a sigh and replied: "That is only too true, monsieur."

M. Gombard pushed away his plate, rose, walked up and down the room, and then stood at the window and looked out. It was a bleak look out; everything was covered with snow. Snow lay deep on the ground, on the trees, on the lamp-post, on the chimneys and the house-tops; and the sky looked as if it were still full of snow.

Just opposite there was a strange, grand old house that arrested M. Gombard's attention; it was a gabled edifice with turrets at either end, and high pointed, mullioned windows filled with diamond-paned lattices. The roof slanted rapidly from the chimneys to the windows, and looked as if the north wind that had howled over it for centuries had blown it a little to one side and battered it a good deal; for you could see by the undulations of the snow

that it was full of dints and ruts. Close under the projecting eaves in the centre of the house there was a stone shield, on which a family coat of arms was engraved; but the ivy, which grew thick over the wall. draped the escutcheon, and, with the snow, made it impossible to read the story it set forth. There was a balcony right under it, from the floor of which an old man was now engaged sweeping the snow; on either side were set huge stone vases, in which some hardy plants grew, defying all weathers, apparently. When the old man had cleared away the snow, he brought out some pots of wintry-looking flowers, and placed them on the ledge of the balcony. M. Gombard had been watching the performance, and taking in the scene with his eyes while his thoughts were busy about these post-horses that were not to be had in the town of Cabicol. He turned round suddenly, and said in his abrupt, magisterial way: "Curious old house. Whose is it?"

"It belongs now to Mlle. Aimée Bobert," replied the landlord; and the question seemed to affect him painfully.

"Whom did it belong to formerly?" inquired M. Gombard.

"To the brave and illustrious family of De Valbranchart. The Revolution ruined them, and the mansion was bought by a retired manufacturer, the grandfather of Mlle. Aimée, who is now the sole heiress of all his wealth."

"Strange vicissitudes in the game of life!" muttered M. Gombard; he turned again to survey the old house, that looked as if it had been transplanted from some forest or lovely fell-side to this commonplace little town. As he looked, the window on the balcony opened, and the slight figure of a woman appeared, holding

a flower-pot in her hand. He could not see her face, which was concealed by a shawl thrown lightly over her head; but her movements had the grace and suppleness of youth. M. Gombard mechanically adjusted his spectacles, the better to inspect this new object in the picture: the same moment a gentleman. hurrying down the street, came up, and lifted his hat in a stately salutation as he passed before the balconv. M. Gombard could not see whether the greeting was returned, or how; for when he glanced again towards the latticed window, it had closed on the retreating figure of the ladv. The old church clock was chiming the hour of noon. "The ancient house has its modern romance, I perceive," observed M. Gombard superciliously; and as if this discovery must strip it at once of all interest in the eyes of a sensible man, he turned his back upon the old house, and proceeded to catechise the landlord concerning There was clearly no post-horses. chance of his procuring any that day, and a very doubtful chance of his procuring any the next. There was no help for it: he must spend at least one night at the Jacques Bonhomme. He was not a man to waste his energies in useless lamentation or invective. One exclamation of impatience escaped him, but he stifled it half way, snapped his fingers, and muttered in almost a cheerful tone, "Tantpis!" The landlord stood regarding him with a gaze of compassion mingled with a sort of cowed admiration. There was a strange fascination about t ese criminals, murderers or forgers, flying for dear life; the co centrated energy, the reckless daing, the heroic self-control, the c n self-possession they evinced in the face of danger and impending death, were

wonderful. If these grand faculties had been ruled by principle, and devoted to lawful pursuits and worthy aims, what might they not have accomplished! The landlord saw the stigma of crime distinctly branded. upon the countenance of this man, though the low, bad brow was almost entirely concealed at one side by the wig; and yet he could not but admire, nay, to a certain extent, sympathize, with him. Gombard noticed his singular air of dejection, his immovable attitude -standing there as if he were rooted to the spot when there was no longer any ostensible reason for his remaining in the room. He bent a glance of inquiry upon him, which said as plainly as words: "You have evidently something to say; so say it."

"Monsieur," said the landlord in a thick undertone, "I have been trusted with many secrets, and I have never been known to betray one. I ask you for no confidence; but, if you can trust me so far, answer me one question: Is it a matter of life and death that you go—that you reach your destination by a given time?"

M. Gombard hesitated for a moment, perplexed by the tone and manner of his host; then he replied, deliberately, as if weighing the value of each word: "I will not say 'life and death,' but as urgent as if it were life and death."

"Ha! That is enough. I understand," said the landlord. His voice was husky; he shook from head to foot. "Now tell me this: will you—will the situation be saved, if you can leave this to-morrow?"

"To-morrow?... Let me see," said M. Gombard; and thrusting both hands into his pockets, he bent his head upon his breast with

the air of a man making a calculation. After a prolonged silence he looked up, and continued reflectively: "If I can leave this to-morrow at four o'clock, with a good pair of horses, I shall be at X—— by ten; and starting afresh at, say, five next morning, I shall be—"

"Saved!" broke in the landlord.
"I shall be saved, as you say," repeated M. Gombard.

"Monsieur, if the thing is possible it shall be done!" protested the landlord. This coolness, this superhuman calm, at such a crisis, were magnificent; this felon, whoever he was, was a glorious man.

"Very peculiar person our host seems," was the hero's reflection, when the door closed behind that excited and highly sensitive individual. M. Gombard then drew a chair towards the fire, pulled a newspaper from his pocket, and poked his feet as far out on the hearth as he could without putting them right into the blaze.

When he had squeezed the newspaper dry, he threw it aside, and bethought to himself that he might as well go for a walk, and reconnoitre this extremely unprogressive town, where a traveller might wait two days and two nights for a pair of post-horses. He pulled on his big furred coat and sallied forth. The snow was deep, but the night's sharp frost had hardened it, so that it was dry and crisp to walk on. There was little in the aspect of Cabicol that promised entertainment; it was called a town, but it was more like a village with a disproportionately fine church, and some large houses that looked out of place in the midst of the shabby ones all round though the largest was insignificant beside the imposing old pile opposite the inn. They looked quaint and picturesque enough, however,

in their snow dress, glistening in the beams of the pale winter sun that shone out feebly from the milky-looking sky. The church was the first place to which M. Gombard bent his steps, not with any pious intentions, but because it was the only place that seemed to be open to a visitor, and was, moreover, a stately, Gothic edifice that would have done honor to a thriving, well-populated town. The front door was closed. M. Gombard was turning away with some disappointment, when an old woman who was frying chestnuts in the angle of the projecting buttress, with an umbrella tied to the back of her chair as a protest rather than a protection against the north wind that was blowing over the deserted market place, called out to him that the side door was open, and pointed to the other side of the church. When the visitor entered it, he was struck by the solemnity and vastness of the place. It was quite empty. At least he thought so; for his eye, piercing the sombre perspective, saw no living person there. In the south aisle the rich stained glass threw delicate shadows of purple and gold and crimson on the pavement, on the stern mediæval statues, on the slim, groined pillars; but the other aisle was so dark that it was like night until your eyes grew accustomed to the gloom. M. Gombard walked slowly through the darkened aisle, peering up at the massive carving of the capitals, and into the quaint devices of the basements, and wondering what could have brought this majestic, cathedral-like church into so incongruous a frame as Cabicol. Suddenly he descried coming towards him from the farthest end of the aisle, like a dimly visible form emerging from total darkness,

the figure of a man. He supposed at first it was a priest, and he thought he would ask him for some information about the church; but, as the figure drew near, he saw he had been mistaken, and presently he recognized the tall, erect bearing and hurried step of the lover of Mlle. Bobert. There was no reason why M. Gombard should not have accosted him just as readily as if he had been the priest he had taken him for, but something checked him at the first moment; and when the young man had passed, he was loath to call him back. He had not the kind of face M. Gombard expected: there was none of the levity or mawkishness that almost invariably characterized the countenances of men who were in love; neither was there any trace of coxcombry or conceit in his dress and general appearance; he had a fine head. well shaped, and with a breadth of forehead that announced brains; his face was thoughtful and intelligent. M. Gombard was sorry for the poor fellow, who was evidently not otherwise a fool. The sound of the lover's footfall died away, and the great door closed behind him with a boom like low thunder. Gombard continued his walk round the church undisturbed. He came to the Lady Chapel behind the high altar, and stood at the entrance. filled with a new admiration and surprise. The chapel was as dimly lighted as the rest of the building: but from a deep, mullioned window there came a flood of amber light that fell full upon a kneeling figure. illuminating it with an effulgence to which the word heavenly might fitly be applied. M. Gombard's first thought was that this new wonder was part of the whole; that it was not a real, living female form he be-

held, but some beautiful creation of painter and sculptor, placed here to symbolize faith and worship in their loveliest aspect. But this was merely the first unreasoning impression of delight and wonder. He had not gazed more than a second on the kneeling figure when he saw that it was neither a statue nor an apparition, but a living, breathing woman. The worshipper was absorbed in her devotions, and seemed unconscious of the proximity of any spectator; so M. Gombard was free to contemplate her at his ease. It was the first time in his life that he ever stood deliberately to contemplate a woman, simply as a beautiful object; but there was something in this one totally different from all the women, beautiful or otherwise, that he had ever seen. It may have been the circumstances, the place and hour, the obscurity of all around, except for that yellow shaft of light that shot straight down upon the lovely devotee, investing her with a sort of celestial glory; but whatever it was, the spectacle stirred the fibres of his heart as they had never been stirred before. Who was this lovely creature, and why was she here in the deserted church, alone and at an hour when there was neither chant nor ceremony to call her thither? M. Gombard's habit of mind and his semi-legal and magisterial functions led him to suspect and discover plots and sinister motives in most human actions that were at all out of the usual course; but it never for an instant occurred to seek any such here. This fair girl -she looked in the full bloom of youth-could only be engaged on some errand of duty, of mercy, or of love. Love! Strange to say, the word, as it rose to his lips, did not call up the scornful, or even the

pitying, smile which at best never failed to accompany the thought of this greatest of human follies in the mayor's mind. He repeated mentally, "Love," as he looked at her, and something very like a sigh rose and was not peremptorily stifled in his breast. While he stood there gazing, a deeper gloom fell upon the place, the yellow shaft was suddenly withdrawn, the golden light went out, and the vision melted into brown shadow. M. Gombard started; high up, on all sides, there was a noise like pebbles rattling against the windows. The lady started too, and, crossing herself, as at a signal that cut short her devotions, rose and hurried from the chapel. She took no notice of the man standing under the archway, but passed on, with a quick, light step, down the north aisle. Gombard turned and walked after her. He had no idea of pursuing her; he merely yielded to an impulse that anticipated thought and will.

On emerging into the daylight of the porch he saw that the rain was falling heavily, mixed with hailstones as big as peas. The lady surveved the scene without in blank dismay, while M. Gombard stealthily surveyed her. She struck him as more wonderful, more vision-like, now even than when she had burst upon him with her golden halo amidst the darkness; her soft brown eyes full of light, her silken brown curls, her scarlet lips parted in inarticulate despair, the small head thrown slightly back, and raised in scared interrogation to the dull gray tank above-M. Gombard saw all these charms distinctly now, and his dry, legal soul was strangely moved. Should he speak to her? What could he say? Offer her his umbrella, perhaps? That was a safe offer to make, and a legitimate opportunity; he blessed his stars that he had brought his umbrella.

"Madame-mademoiselle-pardon me-I shall be very happythat is, I should esteem myself fortunate if I could—be of any service to you in this emergency-"

"Thank you; I am much obliged to you, monsieur," replied the young lady; she saw he meant to be polite, but she did not see what help

he intended.

"If you would allow me to call a cab for you?" continued M. Gom-

bard timidly.

"Oh! thank you." She broke into a little, childlike laugh that was perfectly delicious. "We have no cabs at Cabicol!"

The young merriment was so contagious that M. Gombard laughed too.

"Of course not! How stupid of me to have thought there could be! But how are you to get home in this rain, mademoiselle? you accept my umbrella? It is large; it will protect you in some

degree."

"Oh! you are too good, monsieur," replied his companion, turning the brown eyes, darting with light, full upon him; "but I think we had better have a little patience and wait until the rain stops. It can't last long like this; and if I ventured out in such a deluge, I think I should be drowned."

There was nothing very original, or poetical, or preternaturally wise in this remark, but coming from those poppy lips, in that young, silvery voice, it sounded like the inspiration of genius to M. Gombard. He replied that she was right, that he was an idiot; in fact, had not his age and his business-like, dry, matter-offact appearance offered a guarantee for his sobriety and an excuse for his

attempt at facetiousness, M. Gombard's jubilant manner and ecstatic air would have led the young lady to fear he was slightly deranged or slightly inebriated. But ugly, elderly gentlemen who wear wigs are a kind of privileged persons to young ladies; they may say anything, almost, under cover of these potent credentials.

"This is a fine old church," observed M. Gombard presently.

"Yes; we are proud of it at Cabicol. Strangers always admire it,"

replied his companion.

"They are right; it is one of the best specimens of the Gothic of the Renaissance I remember to have seen," said M. Gombard; "this portico reminds one of the cathedral of B---. Have you ever seen it, mademoiselle?"

"No; I have never travelled farther from Cabicol than Luxort."

"Indeed! How I envy you!" exclaimed the mayor heartily. He was a new man; he was fired with enthusiasm for beauty of every description, in art, in nature, everywhere.

"It is you, rather, who are to be envied for having seen far places and beautiful things!" returned the young girl naïvely. "I wish I could see them too."

"And why should you not?" demanded M. Gombard; he would have given half his fortune to have been able to say there and then: "Come, and I will show you these strange places, and beautiful things!"

"I am alone," replied his companion in a low tone; the merry brightness faded from her face, the sweet eves filled with tears.

M. Gombard could have fallen at her feet, and cried, "Forgive me! I did not mean to give you pain." But he did not do so; he did better: he bowed gravely and mur-

mured, almost under his breath: " Pauvre enfant!" He had never pitied any human being as he pitied this beautiful orphan; but then he was a man, as we know, who passed for having no heart. His young companion looked up at him through her tears, and her eyes said, "Merci!" It was like the glance of a dumb animal, so large, so pathetic, so trustful. The rain still fell in torrents, lashing the ground like whip-cords; but the hailstones had ceased. The two persons under the portico stood in solemn silence, watching the steady downpour. Presently, as when, by a sudden jerk of the string, the force of a shower-bath is slackened, it grew lighter; the sun made a slit in the tank, and gleamed down in a silver line through the lessening drops. The young girl went to the edge of the steps, and looked up, reconnoitring the sky.

"It is raining heavily still," said M. Gombard; "but if you are in a hurry, and must go, pray take my

umbrella!"

"But then you will get wet," she replied, laughing with the childlike freedom that had marked her manner at first.

"That is of small consequence! It will do me good," protested M. Gombard. "I entreat you, mademoiselle, accept my umbrella!"

It was hard to say "no," and it was selfish to say "yes." She hesitated. M. Gombard opened the umbrella, capacious as a young tent, and held it towards her. The young lady advanced and took it; but the thick handle and the weight of the outspread canopy were too much for her tiny hand and little round wrist. It swayed to and fro as she grasped it. M. Gombard caught hold of it again.

"Let me hold it for you," he

said. "Which way are you going?"

"Across the market-place to that house with the veranda," she replied; "but perhaps that is not your way, monsieur?"

It was not his way; but if it had been ten times more out of it, M. Gombard would have gone with delight.

"Do me the honor to take my arm, mademoiselle," he said, without answering her inquiry. It was done in the kindest way—just as if she had been the daughter of an old friend. The young girl gathered her pretty cashmere dress well in one hand, and slipped the other into the arm of her protector. They crossed the market-place quickly, and were soon at the door of the house she had pointed out.

"Thank you! I am so much obliged to you, monsieur!"

"Mademoiselle, I am too hap-

She smiled at him with her laughing brown eyes, and he turned away, a changed man, elated, bewildered, walking upon air. He walked on in the rain, his feet sinking ankledeep in parts where the snow was thick and had been melted into slush by the heavy shower. He did not think now whether there was anything to visit to pass the rest of the day; his one idea was to find out the name of this beautiful creature, then to see her again, offer her his hand and fortune, if her position were not too far above his own, and be the happiest of men for the rest of his life. He was fifty years of age; but what of that? His heart was twenty; he had not worn it out in butterfly passions, "fancies, light as air," and ephemeral as summer gnats. This was his first love, and few men half his age had that virgin gift to place in the

bridal corbeille. Then how respected he was by his fellow-citizens! M. Gombard saw them already paying homage to his young wife; saw all the magnates congratulating him, and the fine ladies calling on Madame Gombard. When he reached the Facques Bonhomme he was in the seventh heaven. The landlord saw him from the window of the bar, and hurried out to meet him with a countenance blanched with terror.

"Good heavens, monsieur! you have ventured out into the town. You have been abroad all this time! What mad imprudence!" he whis-

pered.

"Eh! Imprudence? Not the least, my good sir," replied the mayor, descending with a painful jump from his celestial altitude; "my boots are snow-proof, and behold my umbrella!" He swung it round, shut it up with a click, and held it proudly at arm's length, while the wet streamed down its seams as from a spout.

"Marvellous man!" muttered the landlord, staring at him aghast. "But hasten in now, I entreat you. You ordered dinner at three; it will be served to you in your room."

"Just as it pleases you," returned M. Gombard complacently. don't mind where I get it, provided

it be good."

"Monsieur, for heaven's sake be prudent!" said the landlord; he took the umbrella from him, and hung it outside the door to drip.

"I wish to have a word with you presently, mine host," M. Gombard called out from the top of the stairs.

"I am at your orders, monsieur," said the host. This reckless behavior in a man flying for his life was beyond belief. "It is madness, but it is sublime!" thought the landlord. The table was ready laid when M. Gombard entered his room; the

dinner was ready too, as was evident from the smell of fry and cabbage that filled the place: he went to the window and threw it open. As he did so the mysterious lover appeared at the corner of the streetthat is, of the gabled house-and, as before, lifted his hat and bowed reverently as he passed under the balcony. Was his lady-love there to see it? M. Gombard glanced quickly to the latticed window: it did not open, but he distinctly saw a female figure standing behind it, and retreating suddenly, as if unwilling to be observed. The little pantomime, which he had looked on so contemptuously a few hours ago, was now full of a new interest to him. He wondered what the lady was like; whether she looked with full kindness on this pensive, intellectual-looking adorer, and admitted him occasionally to her presence, or whether she starved him on these distant glimpses. What was he doing in the church just now, with that long scroll in his hand? He had not been praying out of it, certainly. "I must interrogate mine host," thought M. Gombard, stirred to unwonted curiosity about these lovers. Great was his surprise at that very moment to be-. hold the said host cross the street. pass the open gateway of the gabled house, ring at the narrow, arched door and presently disappear within it. What could the landlord of the Facques Bonhomme have to do with the wealthy mistress of that house?

"Monsieur is served!" said the waiter, in a tone which announced that he had said it before.

M. Gombard started, shut the window, and sat down to his dinner. When he had finished it, he went and opened the window again, and, lo and behold! there was the landlord coming back from the mystifying visit. This time M. Gombard saw most distinctly the figure of a woman looking out from the latticed window, and drawing back instantly when he appeared.

There was a knock at the door. "Come in!" said M. Gom-

bard.

The landlord looked very much excited.

"I have done my best for you, monsieur," he began in an agitated manner; "I have left nothing undone, and all I have been able to obtain is that you shall have a good pair of post-horses to-morrow at one o'clock."

"Capital! Excellent! Then I am—" He stopped short.

"Saved!" muttered the landlord

exultingly.

"Yes, yes, my friend, saved," repeated M. Gombard with an air of cool indifference which was nothing short of heroic; "but I am just thinking whether, as I have not been able to start this afternoon, I am not losing my time in starting at all. It might be wiser to—But, no; I had better go. You say the horses are good?"

"The best in Cabicol."

"And I can count upon them?"

"I have the word of a noble woman for that."

"Ha! a woman! Who may she be?"

"The mistress of that house—Mlle. Bobert."

The landlord pronounced these words with an emphasis that might have been dispensed with, as far as regarded the effect of the announcement on M. Gombard.

"Mlle. Bobert!" he repeated in amazement.

"Yes, monsieur. She is young, but she has the mind of a man and the heart of a mother. When every other resource had been tried in vain, I went to her; I told her—enough to excite her sympathy, her desire to help you; she promised me you should have the horses tomorrow at one o'clock."

"You confound me!" said M.

Gombard.

"Have no fear, monsieur; Mlle. Bobert is a woman, but—she is to be trusted. The horses will be here at one o'clock."

"Well, well," said M. Gombard, "I must not be ungrateful either to you or Mlle. Bobert; it is most kind of you to take so much trouble in my behalf, landlord, and most kind of ther to furnish me with the horses. You say she is young; is she pretty?" (Gracious heavens! If the citizens of Loisel had heard this stony-hearted mayor putting such questions!)

"No, monsieur, she is not pretty," replied the landlord; "she is beau-

tiful."

"Diable!" exclaimed M. Gom-

bard facetiously.

"Beautiful as an angel," remarked the landlord, with an accent that seemed to rebuke his guest's exclamation.

"You appear to have a specialite for beautiful persons in Cabicol," said M. Gombard, pouncing on his opportunity; "I met one in the church just now, taking shelter from the rain—the most remarkably beautiful person I ever saw in my life. Who can she be? She lives in the house to the right of the market-place."

"Excuse me, monsieur, she does not," said the landlord sadly.

"No? How do you know? Did you see me—did you see her in the church?"

"No, monsieur, I did not," answered the landlord.

M. Gombard was mystified again.

What a droll fellow mine host was

altogether!

"You evidently know something about her," he resumed; "can you tell me her name and where she lives?"

"Her name is Mlle. Bobert; she lives yonder." He stretched out his arm, and held a finger pointed toward the old house. The effect on M. Gombard was electric. He started as if the landlord's finger had pulled the trigger of a pistol; he grew pale; he could not utter a word. The landlord pitied him sincerely.

"When I told her who it was I wanted the horses for," he continued, "she asked me to describe you. I did so, and she recognized you at once as the person to whom she had spoken in the church. She said immediately it would be a great pleasure to her to do you this service, you had been so very courteous to her."

"Pray convey my best thanks to Mlle. Bobert," said M. Gombard, making a strong effort to control his emotions; "I am profoundly sensible of her goodness."

The landlord cast one deeply tragic look upon his unfortunate guest, bowed and withdrew. he turned away, he bethought to himself how, as the wisest men had been fooled by lovely woman, it was not to be wondered at that the brayest should be made cowards by her; here was a man who could carry a bold heart and a smiling face into the very teeth of danger, but no sooner did he find that a woman had got hold of even a suspicion of his secret than his courage deserted him, and he was incapable of keeping up even a semblance of bravery. Unhappy man! But he was safe; he had nothing to fear from Mlle Bobert.

And so it was the great heiress whom he had seen and surrendered his impregnable heart to, without even a feint at resistance! M. Gombard understood all now; the joyous expression of her lovely face. her unconstrained manner to him. her presence in the deserted church -it was all explained; her lover had been there, praying with her, and she had lingered on praying for him. Happy, happy man! Miserable Gombard! He spent the evening drearily over his lonely fire. How lonely it seemed since he had lost the dream that had beautified it, filling the future with sweet visions of fireside joys, of bright companionship by the winter blaze! He went to bed, nevertheless, and slept soundly. The wound was not so deep as he imagined, this middleaged man, who had no memories of young love, with its kindling hopes and passionate despairs, by which to measure his present suffering. He was very miserable, sincerely unhappy, but, all the same, he slept his seven hours without When at last he did awaking. awake, and bethought him of his sorrow, he took it up where he had left it the night before, and moaned and pitied himself with all his heart. He was to start at one o'clock, but he must make an effort to see Mlle. Bobert again before leaving Cabicol for ever. He ordered his breakfast, ate heartily, and then sallied forth in the direction of the church. He knew of no other place where he was at all likely to meet her; he had not seen her leave the house, but she might have done so while he was breakfasting. As well try to time the coming in and out of the sunbeams as the ways and movements of this fairy châtelaine. She would sit by her latticed window immovable for an hour, then disappear, then return, flitting to and fro like a shadow. M. Gombard watched his opportunity, when the landlord was busy in the crowded bar, to slip out of the house. He felt as if he were performing some guilty action in stealing away on such a foolish errand; how men would laugh at him if they knew, if they could see the revolution that had taken place in him within the last four-and-twenty hours! He tried to laugh at himself, but it was more than his philosophy could accomplish. The great doors of the church were open to-day. They were open every morning up to noon; the good folks of Cabicol went in and out to their devotions, from daybreak until then, not in crowds, but in groups of twos and threes, trickling in and out at leisure. The grand old church looked less gloomy than yesterday; the sunlight poured in, illuminating the nave fully, and scattering the oppressive darkness of the lofty aisles; but to M. Gombard the sunshine brought no brightness. He stood at the entrance of the nave, and looked up the long vista and on every side, but no trace of the luminary he sought was visible. The few worshippers who knelt at the various shrines disappeared one by one, going forth to the day's labor, its troubles and its interests, till the church was nearly empty. M. Gombard turned into the north aisle, and sauntered slowly on. Presently he saw a tall figure advancing, as yesterday, with the same quick step, from out the same side chapel. It was his hated rival! Here he was again, with the same scroll of paper in his hand; he rolled it up carefully, and put it in his pocket as he walked on, calm, pensive, unconcerned, as if nobody had been by, nobody scowling fiercely upon him

as he passed. It was evidently a plan agreed upon between these lovers that they should come and say their prayers together at a given hour every day. M. Gombard was now certain that Mlle. Bobert was in the Lady Chapel: he quickened his step in that direction. Great was his surprise to find it almost filled with people. The first Mass was at six, the second at ten; the second was just finished. People were rising to come away; soon there were only a few, more fervent than the rest, who lingered on at their devotions. M. Gombard looked eagerly all round. There was a group of several persons going out together. Descrying Mlle. Bobert amongst them, he turned and followed quickly, taking the south aisle so as to reach the portico before her, and have a chance of saluting, perhaps speaking to, her; for might he not, ought he not, lawfully seize this opportunity of thanking her? He stationed himself in the open door-way, standing so that she could not pass without seeing The common herd passed him. M. Gombard turned as a light step drew close. He bowed low. "Mademoiselle, I have many thanks to offer you," he said in a subdued voice, as became the solemn neighborhood. "You have done a great kindness to a perfect stranger. I shall never see you again; but if ever, by chance, by some unspeakable good-fortune, it were-in my power, if I could do anything to serve you, I should count it a great hap . . . I should be only too happy!"

Poor man! How confused he was! He could hardly get the words out. It was pitiable to see his emotion. Mlle. Bobert's gentle heart was touched.

"Don't think of it!" she answered

kindly, but with a nervous, timid manner that he was not too absorbed to notice and to wonder at, remembering her unrestrained frankness of yesterday. "It is I who am glad. I wish I had known it sooner, before the market-day. I should have done my best; but I hope it is not too late, that you will esca—that you will get where you want in good time."

"It is of little consequence, mademoiselle. I care not whether I get there late or early now," re-

plied M. Gombard.

"Don't say that! Pray don't!" said the young girl with great feeling. "I should be so sorry! Good-

by, monsieur, good-by."

She hurried away. Did his eyes deceive him, or were there tears in hers? She was strangely agitated; her voice trembled; there was a choking sound in it when she said that "Good-by, monsieur, good-by!" Did she read his secret on his face, in his manner, his tone, and was she sorry for him? It was not improbable. He hoped it was so. It was something to have her pity, since she could give him nothing more. He watched the slight figure drifting out of sight; the step was less elastic than yesterday; she was depressed, unnerved. What a treasure that odious man had conquered in this tender, loving heart!

The post-chaise was at the door punctually at one. M. Gombard was ready waiting for it when the landlord knocked at his door. The traveller's air of deep dejection struck a new pang at his feeling heart.

"Monsieur, I trust sincerely you may not be too late," he said in the quick undertone of strong emotion, as he closed the door of the chaise and leaned forward confidentially.

"Late or not, I shall always remember your kindness, landlord it signifies little whether I am late or not," replied the parting guest.

"Don't say that, monsieur, don't, I entreat you!" said the landlord, lowering his voice to a hoarse whisper. "It would grieve me to the very soul! I swear to you it would! Will you do me one favor?—just to prove that you trust me and believe that I have done my best to forward your es—your wishes: will you send me word by the postilion if you arrive in time?"

"Really, landlord, your interest in my welfare is beyond my comprehension," said M. Gombard; he had had enough of this effusive sympathy, and at the moment it irri-

tated him.

"Don't say so, sir! But I understand—you don't know me; you are afraid to trust me. Well, I will not persist; but if you consent to send me back one word, I shall be the happier for it. And Mlle. Bobert—think of her!"

"Mlle. Bobert! Do you suppose she cares to hear of me again? To know what becomes of me?" asked M. Gombard breathlessly.

"Care, monsieur? She will know no peace until she hears from you; she will reproach herself, as if it had been her fault. You little know what a sensitive heart hers is."

The postilion gave a preliminary flourish of his whip. Crack! crack! it went with a noise that roused all the population of the *Facques Bonhomme*, the inmates of the house, of the back yard and the front; boys, dogs, pigs, ducks, turkeys, geese—all came hurrying to the fore, barking, grumbling, cackling, screaming, and pushing, terrified lest they should be late for the fun.

"I will send you word," said M. Gombard, pressing mine host's

hand with an impulse of gratitude and joy too strong for pride. "Adieu! Merci!"

Crack! crack! and away went the post-chaise amidst such a noise and confusion of men and animals as is not to be described. As the horses dashed down the street, M. Gombard beheld the man with the scroll turn the corner. Curiosity was too much for dignity; he looked back: the hat was raised, and the happy rival passed on.

ABOUT a month after this memorable expedition of M. Gombard's the town of Loisel was in a state of extraordinary commotion; the elections were going on, which meant that all men had gone mad, that the seven devils were let loose, and that no man could be sure of sleeping in his own bed from one night to another. The decree had gone forth that General Blagueur was the government candidate, which signified that every man was to vote for him, and that every man who didn't was a dead manevery man, that is, who had anything to lose or anything to hope for from the powers that were. No one knew who this General Blagueur was, or where he came from, or anything about him, except that he was the right man whom it was their busi-

ness to put into the right place. This was all it concerned them to know or to care as dutiful subjects of Napoleon III. But though there were many such at Loisel, there were many of another sort, who set their backs stiffly against the right man, and were perversely bent on having a wrong man of their own. It does not matter to our story whether this rebellious outburst was justifiable or successful. It may be mentioned, however, for the comfort of the many who are born sympathizers with rebels in every class and country, that the rebellion of Loisel did succeed, and that General Blagueur was ignominiously beaten. But what a price Loisel paid for this wicked victory! detachment of troops was at once sent down to prey upon its vitals

and hold a cocked pistol at its head. The state subsidy promised to the local municipality for rebuilding the tumble-down hospital was refused; the concession for a railway to connect it with the main line, after having been distinctly promised to an enterprising company, was withdrawn; the prefect was "promoted" to a post in a dismal, out-of-theway town in an eastern department. It was said at one moment that the mayor was going to be dismissed, or in some way visited by the imperial displeasure. But this was one of those unreasoning panics that are common to every period of social terror; men lose their heads, and see monstrous and impossible events impending. The government, powerful as it was, never dreamed of laying a finger on M. Gombard.

The worthy mayor forbore, with his usual prudence, from taking any prominent part in the war that was raging at Loisel, and ostensibly left the prefect all the honors and perils of leadership; but it was perfectly well known, as he admitted to friends in confidence, that if M. le Préfet reigned, M. le Maire governed; and M. le Maire's power arose in great measure from the consummate tact with which he managed to hide this fact from everybody, above all from M. le Préfet. Now, it happened that, just when the excitement of the contest was at its greatest, when the wildest stories were afloat about the sinister machinations of the government, the base and cruel means it employed to compass its ends -setting brother against brother, and wife against husband, carrying bribery and discord and all manner of corruption into the very marrow of the bones of Loisel-it happened that, when things were in this state, a young man arrived at the principal inn of the place. He did noth-

ing to provoke the anger or suspicions of the population: he was silent, unobtrusive, speaking to no one at the table-d'hôte where he took his meals: but before he had been two days at Loisel the entire town was infuriated against him. He had been seen standing before a dismantled old round tower that guarded the entrance to the town, and once had boasted of battlements and a cannon; this report had gone abroad the first day of his arrival, and the next morning it was positively stated that he had been seen by an applewoman and a milkman walking round the tower, and scrambling upon a broken wall close by to get a view into it. It was at an early hour, before anybody was likely to be abroad. Such facts, resting on such clear and forcible evidence, admitted only of one interpretation—the stranger was a paid miscreant sent down to examine the tower with a view to fortifying it as of yore, and so terrifying the refractory towns-people into surrendering their independence to the government. A council was called by the outraged citizens, and in ten minutes the fate of the engineer was decided. A rush was made on the inn where he lodged; he was seized, dragged forth amidst the yells of the enraged mob. and would have rendered up his mercenary soul to judgment there and then, if the prefect had not chanced to ride up at the moment to the scene of popular justice.

"What is this? Call out the soldiers! I will have every man of you shot, if you don't release your prisoner!" he cried, charging bold-

ly into the fray.

"He's a spy, a traitor! We won't have him here! He wants to murder us; to butcher our wives and children," etc. Fifty people shouted out these and similar cries together; but they had ceased maltreating the unfortunate stranger, and were now only clutching him and threatening him with clenched fists.

"If he is guilty of any misdemeanor or crime, or intent to commit crime, he shall be made to answer for it; but it is the business of the law to see justice done, not yours. Let go your prisoner!" said the prefect in a tone of high command.

Courage and the prestige of lawful authority seldom fail to impress and subdue an excited mass of men. The mob fell back, and two gendarmes, at a sign from the prefect, stepped forward; the crowd made way for them. "That man is under arrest. Conduct him to the mairie and lock him up," said the prefect.

The gendarnes marched off the rescued man, a crowd trooping on with them, hooting and yelling with an energy that sounded far from reassuring, though it was so in reality, being a kind of safety-valve to the excited mob. It was a great relief, nevertheless, to the object of this manifestation to find himself locked up and safe out of its reach. He was not a coward, but the bravest may be permitted to shrink from such inglorious danger as this from which he had just escaped.

He had not been many hours in captivity when a sound of steps and voices approaching the door announced that some one was about to appear—probably the magistrate. The key turned in the lock, and M. Gombard entered, accompanied by two other persons: one was a clerk who was to take down in writing the interrogatory of the mayor and the prisoner's replies; the other was a witness who was to sign it. The moment M.

Gombard beheld the prisoner his countenance changed: he felt it did, though no one present noticed In the hatless, muddy, batteredlooking man who rose painfully to salute him the mayor recognized the lover of Mlle. Bobert. Was he still only her lover? In all probability he was her husband by this time. When M. Gombard had mastered his surprise and recovered from the shock of the discovery, he proceeded to examine the prisoner. The latter made no attempt at selfdefence; he admitted, with a frankness which the reporter set down as "cynical," that he had visited the round tower on the two occasions alleged; that he would gladly do so again, if the citizens of Loisel gave him the opportunity. He had a natural love for old monuments of every description, and was professionally interested in them-especially ancient fortifications and fortresses of every kind; this old tower was a curious specimen of the fifteenth-century style, he was anxious to take a sketch of it, and so on, with more in the same tone. The clerk wrote on with great gusto, interlarding the prisoner's remarks with commentaries intended to complete them, and explain more fully the depth of malice every word revealed: "The accused looked boldly at M. le Maire"; "the accused here smiled with a fiendish expression"; "the accused assumed here a tone of insolent defiance"; "the countenance of the accused wore an air of cool contempt," and so on. Meantime, the mayor was wondering at the calm, dignified manner of the prisoner. and admiring his well-bred tone and perfect self-possession; he was evidently no common kind of person. this lover, or husband, of Mlle. Bobert. At the close of the interrogato-

ry, when the clerk had wiped his pen and was folding up his document, the mayor, with a vaguely apologetical remark, inquired whether the prisoner was a married man. The answer came with the same quiet distinctness as the preceding ones: "No, monsieur, I am not." He bowed to M. Gombard, and M. Gombard bowed to him. The interview was at an end. "The case looks bad," observed the reporting clerk, as the door closed behind them, M. Gombard himself locking it, and pocketing the key unnoticed by the others, who hurried on, loudly discussing the matter in hand.

"Do you not think it looks badly, M. le Maire?" inquired the re-

porter.

"Very badly. We shall be the laughing-stock of the whole country, if the prisoner is brought to trial; we shall pass for a community of cowardly idiots. We must do our utmost to prevent the affair getting into the local paper, at any rate. You are a friend of the editor's; have you influence enough with him, think you, to make him sacrifice his interest for once from a patriotic motive? It would be a fine example, and you will have done the town a service which I shall take care they hear of in due time."

The reporter held his head high and looked important. "I was thinking of this very thing, M. la Maire, while I was taking down the prisoner's answers," he said. "I did my best to swell the silly business into something like a charge, feeling, as you say, that we should be disgraced if the case were trumpeted over the country as it really stands; but the best way to hinder the mischief will be to keep it out of the paper. I think I can promise you that this shall be done."

"Then my mind is at rest. The honor of Loisel will be saved!" said M. Gombard.

"It shall, it shall, M. le Maire!" said his companion. He was excited and big with a sense of patriotic

responsibility.

The next day was the grand crisis in the electioneering fever—the opening of the ballot-box. All Loisel was abroad and on tiptoe with expectation; there was no buying or selling that day. No wonder the unlucky inmate of the lock-up was forgotten. M. Gombard, however, had not forgotten him.

Late on the previous night, when the town had gone to bed and the streets were silent, nobody being abroad but the night watch and a few stragglers whose business and state of life made them avoid public notice and daylight, M. Gombard might have been seen stealing out by the back door to his own stable, and thence to the corner of a neighboring street, where he fastened his horse to a lamp-post, and stole back to the mairie with the quick, furtive air of a thief. He stepped softly down the stone passage that led to the lock-up room, laid his dark-lantern on the floor outside, and then turned the key slowly and with as little noise as possible. The dead silence that reigned in the place made the slight grating of the key sound like a shriek. When the mayor entered the room, the prisoner was walking up and down, trying to keep his blood in circulation; for the cold was intense, and he was famished with hunger. have come to release you," M. Gombard said. "There is no time to lose. I have left a horse ready saddled at the corner of the street that leads straight to the ruined tower, you will mount him and ride for your life."

The prisoner could hardly believe his ears.

"What does this mean?" he said.
"You are a perfect stranger to me, and whoever you are, you must run a great risk in rendering me this service. May I ask why you take this interest in me?"

"I am glad to pay back a service that one whom . . . that was rendered to me not long since when passing through Cabicol. I will not say more; but you will learn all from the person in question most likely some day. Meantime, have no hesitation in accepting this service at my hands. It is a debt of gratitude that I am happy to be able to pay. Come, every minute

is precious."

The prisoner was not inclined to shut the door on his deliverer; whatever his motive might be, mysterious or romantic, it was a merciful chance for him. two men left the house, stepping softly, stealthily like a couple of thieves. When they reached the entrance of a street, M. Gombard stopped, and pointed silently to where the gaslight fell upon the horse, giving him the appearance of a phantom beast amidst the surrounding gloom. The traveller held out his hand, and grasped the mayor's in a long, strong pressure. M. Gombard returned it, and noticed now that his companion was bareheaded.

"You forgot your hat!" he said in a low voice.

"I lost it in the fray this morning."

"Then the town of Loisel owes you another. Take this; it will serve you on the road as well as a new one."

M. Gombard pulled off his hat and handed it to the fugitive, turned brusquely from him, and hurried home.

No one remembered the stranger who had provoked the popular fury, until two days after his arrest, when the agitation of the electioneering crisis had subsided, and the authorities had leisure to attend to ordinary business. Then it was discovered that the bird had flown, no one knew when, no one knew how. There was great consternation amongst the subordinate officials at the mairie whose duty it was to have looked after him; but each declared he was not responsible, that the prisoner had not been given into his charge, that the prisoner was only put there temporarily, and ought to have been conveyed at once to the jail, etc. This did not prevent them shaking in their shoes in mortal dread of being turned out of their places. The reporter was one of the first to hear of the escape. He flew at once with the intelligence to M. Gombard. M. Gombard looked him straight in the face and burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter; he shook, he held his sides, he laughed till he cried again. The reporter did not at first know what to make of it; but at last the contagion of M. le Maire's mirth was irresistible. He began to laugh also, and then M. Gombard roared, and the two kept it up until they nearly died of it. At last M. Gombard, who was the first to recover himself, took out his red cotton handkerchief and wiped his eyes, and blew his nose, and, after sundry gasps and subsiding chuckles, said: "It is the cleverest joke I ever saw performed in my life, and you are the cleverest rogue I ever met with! It was bad enough to play it off unknown to me, to keep the fun of the thing to yourself; but then to walk in here with such cool impudence. and never move a muscle of your face while you announced it as the

latest intelligence! Ha! ha! ha!" And off he went again, falling back in his chair, and laughing till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

The reporter was in a terrible state. He had not the faintest notion what the fun was about, and he had really joined in it till he could laugh no more. One thing was clear: somebody had done something which M. le Maire thought extremely clever and was highly diverted at, and that he—the reporter—had the credit of.

"Tell me, how did you do it?" said M. Gombard, again recovering himself and mopping his face, that was now as red as the handkerchief.

"Really, M. le Maire, I—I don't quite understand," said the reporter, smiling and trying to look at once confused and knowing.

"Come, come, no more of this! Tell it out like a good fellow; let me have the fag-end of the fun at any rate. How did you manage to give them all the slip?"

"Positively, monsieur, there is some mistake. I don't see—I don't understand—" stammered out the

reporter.

M. Gombard gave a tremendous gasp, as if the laughter were still in him and it required a huge ef-

fort to keep it down.

"Well, well," he said, "I won't press you, but I think you might have trusted me; we are old friends now. However, keep your secret and accept my best compliments. You missed your vocation, though; you ought to have been a diplomatist. I see no reason after this—after this "— here he began to shake again and brought out the cotton handkerchief—" why you should not be minister some day. Vous irez loin, mon cher—vous irez loin!"

There was a knock at the door. The two men stood up. "M. le Maire, I am to understand that you are rather glad than otherwise of this—this mysterious disappearance?" said the reporter, with some hesitation.

"Glad! You deserve the Cross for it!" exclaimed the mayor. "It is the greatest service you could have rendered to the town. Some day or other they shall hear of it."

"I really must disabuse you of a false impression," began the reporter. "Anxious as I was to be of use,

my share in this matter-"

"Tut, tut!" said M. Gombard, "none of this nonsense with me, my dear fellow. Keep your own counsel—quite right; but don't be such an idiot as to deny your services to those who can reward them. Mark my words: Vous irez loin!" He tugged gently at the reporter's ear, and, shaking hands with him, sent him away happy and elated, but utterly mystified.

The affair made some noise; a procès verbal was drawn up, there was an interrogatory of the clerks, and before a week the escape of the

spy was forgotten.

Just before Easter—that is, three months after this little electioneering incident—M. Gombard had occasion to go to Cabicol again. This time, however, he was not alone; he was accompanied by M. le Préfet, the new one, who was making a tournée in his kingdom, and took the mayor with him by way of a moral support. He was a timid man; he knew that his appointment was unpopular, and that M. Gombard's influence might help to reconcile people to it.

They alighted at the Facques Bonhomme to change horses and take some refreshment before officially inspecting the town of Cabicol. M. Gombard was anxious to get some news of Mlle. Bobert,

when the marriage had taken place, and how it was supposed to prosper so far; but there was no opportunity of saying a word to the landlord, for the prefect was there. and M. Gombard had no plausible excuse for leaving him. He could not help remarking the strange expression of the landlord's countenance on first beholding him; the scared, incredulous glance he cast upon him, and the mysterious manner in which, on assisting him from the chaise, he pressed his arm and whispered: "I congratulate you, monsieur; I congratulate you,"

What could the fellow mean by this extraordinary behavior! But the mayor remembered how oddly he had behaved on the occasion of his former visit, and set him down as an original, a harmless monoma-

niac of some sort.

Just as they were starting, and the prefect was receiving the compliments of M. le Curé at the door of the *Facques Bonhomme*, M. Gombard seized the opportunity of a word with the landlord. Pointing his cane towards the old house opposite, he observed in a careless manner:

"Your pretty heiress is married by this, of course? What is her name now?"

"Married! Alas! no," replied the landlord mournfully. "Monsieur has not, then, heard?"

"Good heavens! she is not dead?" cried M. Gombard, dropping his feigned indifference in an instant.

"She is blind, monsieur—stone blind! It was a terrible accident; she was thrown from a carriage, and the shock and injuries she sustained destroyed her sight. They say she may recover it after a while; but I doubt it, monsieur, I doubt it" "And her fiancé—has he given up—"

The mayor was here cut short by the prefect, who called out from the post-chaise, where he had already seated himself.

"Come, M. Gombard, we had

better be starting."

M. Gombard left Cabicol with a sad heart. He looked wistfully up at the latticed window under the grand old escutcheon where he had last caught a glimpse of the beautiful young creature, now so heavily stricken. It made his heart ache to think of her in that lonely house, her bright eyes sightless, dwelling in perpetual night. Why had not his rival insisted on marrying her in spite, nay, because, of this catastrophe? He could fancy how her brave and generous nature would refuse to accept what she considered a sacrifice; but what sort of a love was his that could not overcome such reluctance? Poor child! How gladly he would have devoted himself to soothing and cheering her darkened life! But perhaps he was wronging his rival; it might be that she had merely postponed their marriage, that they both believed in her ultimate recovery, and that she preferred waiting until it had taken place, until her brown eyes had been restored, until the spirit which once animated them should awake and vivify them as of old.

M. Gombard did not return to Cabicol for many a long year after this. He left Loisel, and went to live in Normandy, where an uncle had died and left him some property—a rambling old house, surrounded by some wooded fields and a fruitgarden; the house was called the Château, and the fields were called "the Park." M. Gombard had not been long in possession of

this ancestral estate before he was elected mayor of the village: He was the kind of man to be elected mayor wherever he resided. Some men, we hear said, are born actors, doctors, ambassadors, etc.; M. Gombard was born a mayor.

Life went smoothly with him amongst his fields and fruit-trees for nearly ten years. Then friends took it into their heads, and put it into his, that he ought to become a deputy; the elections were at hand, and they put up his name as opposition candidate for the department of X-, whose chef-lieu was Loisel. The proposal took M. Gombard's fancy mightily. To go back to the place where he had left such a good name and exercised such undisputed influence; to go back as representative of the department this was a triumph that even in perspective made him purr like a stroked cat. He started off one morning in high spirits for Loisel. His most direct road lay through Cabicol. The railroad landed him within a mile of the quaint old town at eight o'clock in the morning. He was in the mood for a walk, so he set out on foot. It was within a few days of Christmas; the weather was intensely cold, but the sky was as blue as a field of sapphire, and the sun shone out as brightly as in spring. He remembered the first time he had been to Cabicol; it was about this season of the year, but what miserable weather it was! Snow deep on the ground, and then the heavy rains coming before it melted, and turning the roads and streets into canals of mud and slush. This bracing cold, with the sun cheering up the landscape, was delightful. M. Gombard walked on with a brisk step, whistling snatches of one tune or another, till he came within sight of the church. The first

glimpse of the strong, graceful spire, pricking the blue sky, so high, so high it rose, brought a flood of soft and tender memories to the hardheaded, embryo legislator; he smiled, and vet he heaved a little sigh as the recollection of his first and his last visit to that fine old church came back upon him. He wondered how life had gone with the fair enchantress who had spirited away his heart from him in the brown twi light of the Gothic temple; whether she had ever cast a thought on him from that day to the present. And her sight—had she recovered it? M. Gombard had often thought of this, and breathed a hearty wish that it might be so. And was she married? In all probability, yes. The chances were that she was now the happy mother of a blooming little family, of which the man he had for a moment so vigorously detested was the proud protector. If so, M. Gombard would call upon him and pay his respects to madame. This was the proper thing for an opposition candidate to do, and it would be an opportunity for Mlle. Bobert's husband to show his gratitude for former services.

He entered the town, now a busy, thriving place, and, crossing the market-place, made straight for the Jacques Bonhomme. There it was, not a whit changed, just as dingylooking, with its stunted laurels before the door, that stood wide open as in the midst of summer. There, too, was the picturesque old manorhouse opposite, just as he had first seen it, only that the roof was not covered with snow nor fringed with icicles. The ivy was thicker; it had grown quite over the front wall. but had been roughly clipped away from a space over the balcony, leaving the escutcheon visible—a gray patch amidst the glistening green of the ruin-loving parasite. Two persons were coming out of the house as M. Gombard drew near. A group of poor people stood at the lodge, evidently awaiting them, with eager, questioning faces. One of these persons was the doctor, the other was the curé. The doctor walked on in silence. The curé spoke: "Alas! my friends, she is gone from us. We must be resigned; for the loss is all ours, the gain all hers."

M. Gombard felt a great pang go through him. He stood near the group, and heard the tearful cries that answered the cure's words: "Ah, la bonne demoiselle! Yes, it is a happy deliverance for her; but what a loss for us, for the sick, for all Cabicol!" And they dispersed, lamenting, and repeating through their tears: "Pauvre Mlle. Bobert! Our good friend! She is gone! The funeral is to be to-morrow!"

So she had died, as she had lived, "Mlle. Bobert." M. Gombard lingered a moment, looking up at the deep, latticed window where the slight figure would never be seen looking forth again. She was to be buried to-morrow, they had said. He resolved to wait and attend the funeral. He remained gazing up at the picturesque old edifice, which had arrested his curiosity and admiration for its own sake before he had become interested in its mistress. Whom would it go to now? he wondered.

A step on the pathway outside made him turn and look in that direction. He was startled, but not much astonished to see the fiance of Mlle. Bobert approaching. Poor man! He looked much older than M. Gombard had expected to find him. Evidently he had suffered during these eleven years; his life had been blighted as well as

hers. The manly heart of the mayor went out to him in sympathy. He was preparing to hold out his hand, when, to his consternation, the gentleman raised his hat with the old courtly bow that M. Gombard so well remembered. How was this? The unhappy man was ignorant of his sorrow! He was saluting the dead, and he knew it not.

"Monsieur, pardon me," said M. Gombard, meeting him with an outstretched hand and a face full of genuine compassion. "You have evidently not heard the sad news?"

"Concerning whom?" inquired the gentleman, giving his hand, but looking very blank.

"Who? Why . . . Mile. Bobert!"

"What has happened to Mile. Bobert, monsieur?" asked the gentleman.

"What has happened? Good heavens! Can it be possible... The worst has happened: she is dead!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the gentleman. Was this man some near relation of hers, or did he mistake *him* for one?

"I tell you she is dead!" repeated M. Gombard, his surprise rising rapidly to indignation. "She died only a few minutes ago, and she is to be buried to-morrow!"

"Naturally; that is the law. A person who dies this morning must be buried to-morrow, unless," the speaker continued, fancying he had here a clue to M. Gombard's excitement—" unless good reason can be shown for obtaining a delay, in which case, as a resident, I may be of some use to you; you seem to be a stranger here."

M. Gombard could not credit his senses. Was he dreaming, or was this man gone mad? He stared at

him for a moment in dumb amazement. At last he said:

"Perhaps I am under a mistake.
... I may be taking you for a person who resembles you strongly.
Who are you, monsieur?"

"I am an archæologist by profession; my name is De Valbranchart." He drew out his pocket-book and handed a card to M. Gombard.

"Henri, Comte de Valbranchart," repeated M. Gombard absently. He had heard the name before; but where? "The name is not unknown to me," he added.

"It can hardly be unknown to any one who has read history," replied the count, with quiet hauteur. 'The De Valbrancharts played a stirring part in the history of France as early as the twelfth century. But their day is over; they have no existence in the present. I am the last of the name."

"Where have I heard it before?" said M. Gombard musingly.

"Perhaps at Cabicol," returned the count. "This old house was the home of my family for three hundred years. Those are our arms carved upon its front; for twenty years I have saluted them daily as I pass. It is foolish, perhaps; but I feel as if the spirit of my ancestors haunted the old roof-tree, and that they are not insensible to the filial homage."

As he said this he looked up at the stone shield, where a lion passant, on gule, was still visible, surmounted by a fleur-de-lis argent, en chef. Raising his hat deferentially to the worn and partly-obliterated symbols of a glory that lived only in his faithful memory, the Comte de Valbranchart bowed to M. Gombard and passed on.

"And so this was the lady-love he worshipped," said M. Gombard to himself, as the tall, pensive man disappeared down the street. "He never loved her, perhaps he never knew her; and if I had only known, I might have . . . But it is no use regretting the irreparable. I should have been a more miserable man at this hour, if I had won her and loved her all these years."

THE DEVIL'S CHRISTMAS GIFT.

LET fastidious and fashionable people say what they will about shanties, there was something in Mike Roony's humble dwelling that was really attractive. Perched on the top of a broad and lofty rock near the corner of Broadway and Forty-ninth Street, it commanded a magnificent view of the Hudson River and the Sound; and as the only way to reach it was by a flight of steps which Mike had cut in the rock, 'twas known among the neighbors by the name of Gibraltar. Some said Roony was a squatter: that he paid neither tax nor rent for the small piece of Manhattan Island which he occupied. Well, be this as it may, one thing is certain—he always declared his readiness to move when they blasted him out. Nothing grew upon this homestead—not a bush, not a weed, not a blade of grass; it was a little desert, roamed over by a goat, and swept clean by the winds, which made it their romping-ground from every quarter of the compass.

But Mike had a wife who loved flowers, and in the window fronting south stood a flower-pot wherein there bloomed a sweet red rose. Helen—for this was her name—had the true instincts of a lady, albeit her garment was not of silk and she sometimes went barefoot. She kept herself scrupulously neat—for water does not cost anything—and was fairer to behold than the flower she cherished. Born in America, of Irish parents, hers was one of those ideal faces which we not seldom meet with among Ame-

rican women. A freckle or two only helped to set off the perfect whiteness of her skin; her eyes had taken their hue from the blue sky of her native land, and like the raven's wing was the color of her hair.

But although Helen knew that she was beautiful, and there was a small mirror in the shanty, she did not waste any time before it, unless, perhaps, of a Sunday morning ere going to High Mass. true helpmate was this wife in every sense of the word. She arose betimes, no matter how cold the weather might be, to prepare her husband's breakfast, and, if a button was missing off his coat, always found time to sew it on before he went to his work. The floor of the shanty was daily sprinkled with fresh sand; the pictures on the wall -one of the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the cross, the other of St. Joseph-were never hung awry; you saw no broken panes in the windows; and the faces of her two little children, Michael and Helen, were kept as bright and clean as her own. She never quitted home during her husband's absence to gossip and talk scandal with other women; and, monotonous as her life may seem, 'twas a happy one. Mike, too, was happy, and no mariner homeward bound ever watched for the beacon-light on his native coast more impatiently than he watched for the light which Helen used to place in the window, whence he might see it from afar as he trudged back from his day's work.

And no matter how hard it might be raining, or snowing, or freezing, at the first glimpse of its welcome rays Mike always burst out into a merry song. In the evening she would read him to sleep with some story from the *Catholic Review*; then, when his head began to nod, she gently drew the pipe out of his mouth and whispered: "Love, 'tis bed-time."

Oh! happy were those days—so happy that Helen would sometimes tremble; for surely they could not last for ever—otherwise it would be heaven on earth.

But, sober and inoffensive as Roony was, he was not without enemies; indeed, for very reason of his sobriety and inoffensiveness some hated him. And one evening-Christmas eve-he and his young wife were seated by the stove, talking about the Black-eye Club, whose head-quarters were in a liquor-store close by, and whose members had sworn vengeance on Mike for refusing to join them. "They have threatened to beat me," he said; "but if they only give me fair play, I'll be a match for the biggest of 'em."

"Ay, fair play!" said Helen, shuddering. "Savages like them always take a man unawares, and, like wolves, they hunt in packs."

"They carry pistols, too," added Mike, "while I carry nothing but my fists."

"Well, bad as I feel about it, husband dear, I'd a thousand times rather have you brave the whole villanous gang than see you join them; for now we are so happy." Here Helen twined her arm round his neck, then, gazing on him withloving eye, she continued: "You have never touched liquor, you do not get into fights, you are so good; and this rock is dearer

to me than the greenest farm in the land."

"With you any spot would be a paradise," rejoined Mike; "and I hope to-morrow will be the last Christmas that we'll go without a turkey and some toys for the children."

"Oh! I'm sure it will," said Helen.
"But you are right to pay all our debts first; and already the boards which the shanty cost are paid for, and so is the stove, and there is nothing owing except the coal"; then, with a smile: "And I've promised a pailful of coal to Mrs. McGowan, who lives on the next rock. You see, poor as we are, we can afford to give something away. Oh! isn't that sweet?"

"It is indeed," answered Roony; then, after a pause: "But now tell me, wife, who do you think is going to preach to-morrow?"

"Father H——."

"Really! Oh! I'm so glad; he always knows when to stop."

"A good sermon can't be too long," said Helen.

"Well, I own it isn't easy to leave off when once you get a-going. I was a brakeman five years, and know what it is to stop a train of cars. But if I was in the pulpit I'd know how to do it."

"How?"

"Well, I'd just fix my eye on the sleepiest-looking fellow in the congregation, and the very moment his head began to nod I'd lift up my hand and say, 'A blessing I wish you all.'" Here Helen laughed, and while she was laughing Mike added: "And I've sometimes thought Father H—— kept his eye on me."

While they were thus chatting by the little stove the northwest wind went howling round the house, and Jack Frost tried his best, his very best, to get in, but did not succeed, not even through the keyhole; for Roony was not sparing of fuel, and the stove-pipe was red hot. Indeed, 'twas rather pleasant to hear the voice of the blast and the rattling of the window-panes; while at times the whole building seemed to rise up off the rock, and then Helen would throw an uneasy glance at her husband, who would grin and say: "It's well anchored, darling; never fear." At length the clock struck midnight, and the children, who had been sleeping on their parents' laps, were taken gently up and put to bed-so gently that their slumber was scarcely broken. Then husband and wife retired too; but, ere placing their heads on the pillow, they knelt and gave thanks to God for the many blessings they had enjoyed since last Christmas. Oh! sweet was the sleep which followed the prayer, and happy were their dreams; and when Christmas morning came, the sun did not rise on a happier home than this one. Scarcely had its rays flashed through the east window when Mike sprang up, and, clapping his hands, shouted: "O Helen, Helen! open your eves and see what Santa Claus has brought you."

Obedient to his call, Helen awoke; and sure enough, to her great surprise, discovered one of her stockings dangling from the latch of the door, and there was something in it, but what it might be she had not the least notion, nor her husband either.

"Oh! go quick and see what it is," she said. "I'm so curious to know."

Accordingly, Mike went to the stocking; then, plunging his hand into it, drew forth—a bottle, and on it was marked, "Whiskey."

"Well, I declare," he said, grinning, as he held it up, "here is

something, Nell, to drink your health with this Christmas day."

But the wife's bright look had vanished in a moment when she heard what the bottle contained; and now, in a grave tone, she answered: "No, dear, do not drink my health with that. Thank God! you have never yet touched liquor, so do not begin the bad habit on this sacred day, nor on any other day. Throw the bottle out of doors—do!"

"Well, now, can't a fellow take just a sip in honor of Santa Claus, who brought it?"

"No, no; the devil brought it. Don't take even one drop; throw the poison away—quick!"

"Oh! but it's a bitter cold morning, Nell, and the fire isn't lit, and a sip of whiskey 'll keep me warm while I make it—only just one sip."

"Husband, I beg you"—here the wife clasped her hands—"I implore you to get rid of the devil's gift as quick as possible. I see that you are already tempted. O husband! listen to my voice."

To calm her—for she seemed much excited—Roony opened the door, and, stepping out into the frosty air, struck the neck of the bottle against the rock, so as to make her believe that it was broken in pieces; but only the neck came off. "Really," he said within himself, after moistening his lips with a drop, "this doesn't taste bad; surely a little won't hurt me." Then, concealing the bottle in the goat-house, he went back and told his wife what he had never told her before—a lie.

"You broke it! Oh! I'm so glad," she exclained, "so very glad!" But there was a tear in her eye as she spoke; then, while Mikebusied himself kindling the fire, Helen knelt down and remained agood while on her knees.

"Why, Nell, what ails you?" he asked, drawing near her after she had finished the prayer. "This is Christmas morning: let's be merry."

"Oh! yes, I must be merry," she replied, trying to assume a cheerful air. But there was something in her tone which struck Mike as peculiar, and for a moment he blush-Did she suspect the untruth which he had told? No: her faith in him was unbroken, and she could not account to herself for the heavy weight upon her heart, which even the prayer had not taken away; and now, despite the glorious sunbeams flooding the room and the sweet voices of her children, Helen felt sad. Who had entered their happy home in the stillness of night, and placed that ill-omened gift in her stocking? Might it really be the Evil One? And while she wondered over this mysterious occurrence, she thought of the many families, once happy and well-to-do, who had come to grief and misery through intemperance. Was her own day of trial approaching? What did this Christmas gift portend? "But no, no: I will not be sad: I'll be cheerful. For Michael's sake I will," she said to herself. Then, as the bright look spread over her face, Mike clapped his hands and shouted: "That's right, my darling. Hurrah!"

And so the early hours went by; and when ten o'clock struck, they set out for St. Paul's Church, which was about nine blocks off, the mother holding her little boy by the hand, the father carrying little Nell, who was not yet old enough to walk so far. But when they were within a few paces of the church door, Roony stopped and declared that he had forgotten to feed the goat. "Well, dear, it's too late now," said Helen. "Nanny can

wait; you'll miss Mass if you go back."

"O wife! how would you like to miss your breakfast?" rejoined Mike. "Nanny is hungry. I must return."

"And lose Mass?" she said, with a look of tender reproach. Roony did not answer, but turned on his heel and went away, leaving her too overcome with surprise to utter another word.

The priest was already at the altar when Helen arrived, and the church very full; yet more people continued to push their way in, and ever and anon she would look round to see if her husband were among the late-comers. She tried to keep her thoughts from wandering, but did not succeed. Never had Helen felt so distracted before, and the foreboding of evil which had oppressed her in the early morning now returned and shrouded her in such gloom that she could hardly pray. But, troubled as the poor woman was, no suspicion of the truth had yet entered her mind. She was very innocent, and did not doubt but Mike, having come late. was hidden among the crowd by the door.

At length the service ended; and now she felt quite certain that he would join her. But five minutes elapsed, and then ten — a whole quarter of an hour passed away. The congregation was fast dispersing; still, her husband did not appear. "Oh! where can he be?" she asked herself. "Where can he be?" At every voice that greeted her Helen started; for many knew her and wished her a merry Christmas, and Mrs. McGowan, who had a keen eye, exclaimed: "Why, what ails you, Mrs. Roony?"

How lonesome the wife felt as she plodded homeward! Yet her

children were prattling merrily, and the street was full of happy people. She was blind to them all, she was deaf to every word that was spoken, and kept murmuring again and again: "Where can Michael be?"

Finally Helen reached home, and was about to cross the threshold, when suddenly she paused and uttered a cry which might have been heard afar, 'twas so loud and piercing; while little Mike and Nell exclaimed at one breath: "Mamma,

look at papa sleeping."

Yes, there lav their father stretched upon the floor, breathing heavily. But 'twas not the pleasant slumber into which Helen loved to see him fall when he returned weary from a hard day's work; and after gazing on him a moment with an expression impossible to describe, she buried her face in her hands. Poor thing! well might she weep; and if a feeling of disgust mingled with her grief, may we not forgive her? He was breathing heavily; by his right hand lay an empty bottle with the neck broken off, and the air of the room was tainted with the fumes of liquor.

"Stop! let your father sleep." she said to her son, who had knelt down and was playfully brushing the hair off his parent's face. But this precaution was needless; the latter was too deep in his cups to be roused by the touch of the child's hand, and presently, with a heavy heart, Helen turned away and set to work to prepare the dinner. There was no turkey to cook; still, she had intended to provide a somewhat better repast than ordinary, it being Christmas day. But, alas! she hardly knew what she was doing as she bustled about the stove; and when, by and by, dinner was ready, she tasted not a mouthful herself-all appetite had fled.

The children, however, ate heartily, pausing now and again to say: "Mamma, why don't you call papa?"

It was evening when Roony awoke, and the moment Helen perceived that his eves were open she began to tremble: for, though she did not doubt but he was sober by this time, she felt as if another man were near her, and not the one whom she had once so honored and trusted. And as he stared at her from the floor, he did indeed appear changed; there was a silly, vacant look on his face, his eyes were bloodshot, and it was almost five minutes before he attempted to Then, without opening his lips, he got up and went out of the house, closing the door behind him with a slam.

"Well, I declare," he said, tossing away the broken bottle—"I declare I've been drunk; and, what's more, I told a lie and missed Mass. Will she ever forgive me?" Then stamping his foot: "Oh! what a fool I've been—what a wicked fool!"

Presently, while he was thus lamenting his sins, the door opened and a voice said: "Come to me, dear; come to me."

"O Helen!" he cried, turning toward her, "can you forgive me, will you?"

"Come to me," she repeated, opening wide her arms, but at the same time drawing back a step from the threshold; for curious eyes were watching them from a neighboring rock. Quick Roony flew into the shanty, then, dropping down on his knees, burst into tears. The wife wept too, while little Mike and Nell looked on in childish wonder at the scene.

"But, darling, why do you cry?" he exclaimed presently, rising to his feet. "You've done nothing wrong."

Helen made no response, but brushing the tears away, twined her arms around his neck.

"Well, speak, darling. What have 'you done to cry?" repeated Roony. "O Michael!" she answered in faltering accents, "you have been such a good, kind husband to me. We have been so happy togetherso very, very happy. God has blest us with two darling children. We might live, perhaps, years and years in this sweet spot; and when at length death parted us, 'twould not be for long-we should meet again in heaven. O Michael! I weep because all this may be changedbecause death might part us for ever and ever!"

"No, no, darling, it shall not! It shall not!"

"Well, I will pray with heart and soul, husband dear, that you may not fall a second time. Alas! if the habit of drink once fasten upon you, it may be impossible to shake it off; and intemperance not only ruins many a family, but damns many a soul." At her own words the wife shuddered and began to weep anew.

"Well, I say never fear. Not another drop of liquor will I touch," said Mike—"no, not another drop

as long as I live."

"Oh! thank God!" exclaimed Helen, "thank God!"

"Yes, yes, I solemnly promise it. And now, darling, try and forget all about my wickedness to-day, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll forget all about it," she answered. With this Helen began to sing a merry song, in which her husband joined, while the children went romping around the room, and the cricket came out of his tiny hole beneath the stove and chirped merrily too. But although Helen had forgiven him, yet Mike's

conduct had wrought a deep impression on her; and when bedtime arrived and they retired, he slept soundly enough, but she lay awake for hours. And whenever the wind shook the house, she would tremble; and once the door seemed to open. But no, this was merely fancy. The noise, however, which startled her at midnight was real and not imagination. It proceeded from the den where the Black-eve Club was celebrating Christmas, and mingled with their yells were horrible oaths. Helen did not doubt but a fight was going on; perhaps some one was being beaten to death. Then she turned toward her husband, and even touched him, to make quite sure that he was lying beside her.

The following day Roony went off to work as usual, and came back in the evening, cheered as usual, too, by the light in the window; and immediately its welcome rays flashed upon him, he exclaimed: "Oh! what a good wife I have. God bless her!"

Ay, Helen is good! Her heart is with you, Mike, wherever you go; and at this very moment she is kneeling by the little beacon, praying that it may guide you safely to her side, and that you may not be tempted to stray into the bar-room on the corner.

But not the next day only, the whole week, Roony was his old, good-natured, hard-working, sober self; and what had marred the joy of Christmas was fast fading from Helen's memory. But one Saturday evening, as he was trudging homeward with his pocket full of wages, there came over him a sudden craving for spirits; the broken bottle out of which he had taken his maiden drink seemed to rise up before his eyes; the delicious

taste of the whiskey was on his lips afresh. In fact, the craving was so very strong, so wholly unexpected, that it startled him, and his heart beat violently.

"Oh! I never thought I should be seized in this way," he groaned. "How very strange! I can't resist; yet I must. O Helen! would to God I had not taken that first drink." The words were scarcely breathed when the beams of the home-light flashed upon him. 'Twas still a good distance off, and the air was muggy and thick, yet it shone brighter than Mike had ever seen it shine before. For about a minute he watched it yearningly; he even quickened his steps and twice groaned, "O Helen!" Then, muttering a curse upon himself, he turned his eyes away from the light, and at the same time, swerving out of the dear home-path, he hurried on to the liquor-saloon.

"Three cheers for Mike Roony!" was the salutation which greeted him from a dozen voices as he entered. "I knew you'd join us afore long," said the President of the Black-eye Club, advancing and shaking him warmly by the hand; then, motioning to the others, their empty glasses were refilled and the new-comer's health toasted. Presently Roony wanted to treat; but "No, no," they all shouted; "'tis our privilege to treat you this evening." Whereupon the bottle was passed round again; while poor Mike, flattered beyond measure by this unlooked-for reception, thought to himself: "What a fool I was not to join the club long ago!"

And so on they went carousing, and Helen's husband growing more and more intoxicated, until at length, when he was barely able to stand, a voice exclaimed: "Now, boys, let's christen him." Quick as

lightning a violent blow on the eye followed these words; then down dropped Roony unconscious to the floor.

"Where can he be?" said the anxious wife, seeing that he did not return at the usual hour. "I pray God nothing has happened. The dear fellow came near being killed by a blast last year. O my God! I hope nothing has happened." After waiting for him awhile, Helen and her young ones took their places at the supper-table; but not a morsel did she eat. A vague fear possessed her. The children spoke, but the mother answered them not: the cricket chirped—she was deaf to its merry song; and every few minutes she would open the door. and look out and listen. But no husband appeared. And now, without him, how everything seemed to change! The rock, the shanty, the pretty rosebush she cherished, even the children whom she loved ten thousand times more than the rose all appeared different to her eves: nothing was the same when he who was the corner-stone of home was missing; and Helen realized as never before what a link of adamant bound her heart to his. "Oh! if anything has happened. If he is killed, 'twill kill me too," she sigh-Then, when little Mike asked, "Where is papa?" she answered, "Coming soon." And even to speak these words brought her a moment's peace of mind, and she would try to think of some good cause which might detain him. But the clock went on ticking, and the hour-hand moved further and further toward midnight; still, no husband came. The children were put to bed, and soon were fast asleep; the fire in the stove died out; the cricket became silent; but the wife grew more and more

wakeful, while ever and anon she would go to the window and nervously snuff the candle burning there. Then again she would open the door and listen—listen with all her ears; but she heard only the throbbing of her heart and boisterous voices in the direction of the liquor-saloon.

"Well, I'll watch and pray till he arrives," said Helen: then kneeling beside the crib where her children were sleeping, she lifted her thoughts to God. But the many hours she had been awake, the busy day prolonged so far into night, proved at last too much for her; and just as the clock struck one her weary eyes closed and her guardian angel took up the prayer which she left unfinished.

How long Helen slept she did not know; but when she awoke the candle had burned out and the chamber was pitch dark. "Oh! what is the matter? What did I hear? Was it only a dream?" she cried, starting to her feet.

"Come, now, I want my supper!" growled Mike, staggering further into the room. "Where's my supper?"

Pen cannot describe the wife's feelings as she groped about for the match-box. And when finally, after letting three or four matches drop out of her quivering fingers, she succeeded in lighting a fresh candle, what a sight did she behold! Was this man scowling at her, with one eye battered and swollen, her own Michael?

"I say, where's my supper?" he repeated with an oath.

Without uttering a word, but with a sinking of the heart which she had never experienced till now, Helen made haste to kindle a fire and heat up the potatoes and pork which she had laid aside for him

in the evening. While thus employed Roony dropped down on a bench; then, after grumbling at her a few minutes, began suddenly to "I want you to know," giggle. said he, "that I'm now a member of the Black-eye Club. But that's plain enough by looking at me, eh? And when I've eaten supper, I'm going to make you cut my haircut it short to fighting trim.'

"O husband!" replied Helen, in a voice of sorrowful entreaty, "do not break my heart, I love

vou so."

"Break your heart! Ha! ha! that's a good joke." Then, glancing up at the clock: "Well, by jingo, Nell, I'd better call this meal breakfast. Why, it's pretty nigh four, isn't it?"

Encouraged, perhaps, by the somewhat milder tone in which these last words were spoken, she now approached him, and, bending down, proceeded to examine his wounded "Yes, bathe it for me," he continued. "But, for all it hurts, I'm deuced proud of it; for it's the christening mark of the Black-eve Club."

"Oh! hush, dear. Don't mention that wicked gang any more," said the wife. "I hate them; they are fiends."

"Fiends? Ha, ha! Well, well, hurry up with my breakfast or supper, whichever you choose to call it: then get the scissors and cut off my hair."

"Let me bathe your poor eye first," she answered; "then, after you have done eating, 'twill be daylight, and I want you, love, to come to Mass this morning, and to see the priest; we'll go together. O Michael! dark clouds are lowering over us; come with me to the priest."

"To the priest? No, indeed! The Black-eye Club have nothing to do with priests."

"O husband! do not talk so; save yourself before it is too late," she went on, as she sponged the clotted blood off his cheek.

"I can't, wife. The craving for spirits is too strong. It all comes, I know, from that one little drink Christmas morning. Now I'm not master of myself; I believe there's a devil in me."

A long, shadowy silence followed, during which Helen wept, while ever and anon Roony would say, "It's no use crying." While he was at his breakfast she once more begged him to go with her to Mass. But again he refused, saying, "Our club don't go to Mass; nor must you, until you have trimmed my hair."

"Why, 'tis short enough," replied Helen.

"Is it? Look!" And as Mike spoke he clutched a fistful of it, then gave a pull. "Now, don't you see that some chap might grab me and get my head in 'chancery'? I want my hair short as pig's bristles, and well greased too; then I'll be like an eel, and grab me who can."

The wife obeyed without a murmur, performing the operation to his entire satisfaction; after which, approaching the crib where her children were sleeping, she gave each a soft kiss, then went off by herself to church.

Helen had never been wanting in devotion; her faith had always been strong. But now, as she took her way along the lonely street, with the morning star still shining in the heavens, she felt as though God were come nearer to her; and all her former prayers were cold compared with the prayers which she offered this morning at the foot of the altar. And when

Mass was over and she turned her steps homeward, 'twas with a more cheerful heart and a firm resolution to be a loving and faithful wife to the end, the bitter end, whatever it might be.

When Helen entered the shanty she found her husband gone. But little Mike was there, and he looked so like his father; and little Nell was there too. Oh! surely they would not be abandoned. "No, God is with us," she murmured. "My prayers will be heard, and Michael will one day be what he used to be. Yes, yes! I know it." As she spoke a radiant look spread over her face; then, making the sign of the cross, she straightway set about her daily duties as if nothing had happened. O blessed Faith! which makest the darkest hour bright; richer, indeed, in gifts than a gold-mine art thou, and stronger than a mountain to lean upon in moments like these!

When evening came round, Helen placed the candle in the window as usual, although she had faint hope that Mike had been at work. And again she set up till a very late hour, keeping the fire burning and taking good care not to fall asleep this time.

It was one o'clock when Roony returned. He was not tipsy, but surly, and when she laid her hand on his arm he flung it away, saying, "Now, I want no preaching and petting; I want my supper." The poor woman was a little frightened, and waited upon him awhile in silence.

"Yet I must speak," she murmured; "I must brave his anger. No husband was ever kinder than he, no spouse happier than I have been till now; I must make one more effort to save him from ruin." With this, she again gently touched his arm and said, "Dear love—"

"D—your preaching; I won't listen to it," he snarled, cutting short her words, and in a voice so loud that it awoke the children. Then, presently, shrugging his shoulders, "Oh! you needn't whimper. I'm bound to be master here."

"Have I ever denied your authority?" inquired Helen, looking calmly at him through her tears.

"Oh! hush. Don't bother me," continued Roony, lifting up his plate. Then, as if he had changed his mind about throwing it at her, he dashed it into shivers on the floor.

"Alas! what a curse liquor is," she cried in a tone of passionate energy. "What a terrible curse!"

"Well, I'm not drunk, am I?"
"But you have been drinking; and the poison is in your veins. O Michael! for God's sake abandon the villanous set you belong to!" Here he clenched his fist. But heedless of the threat she went bravely on: "Think how happy we were, Michael. This bare rock was more lovely than a garden to us. And we have two dear children; look at them yonder! Look at them!"

"I say, woman, go to bed and leave me alone," thundered Roony, bringing down his huge fist on the table with a thump which made everything in the shanty rattle.

Poor, poor Helen! With a heart torn by anguish, she obeyed. But not a wink of sleep came to her—no, not a wink, and never night seemed longer than this one. But her husband slept like a top, nor opened his eyes until ten the next morning; then, as soon as he was dressed, and without waiting for breakfast, out he went to take a drink.

"Oh! what is coming? What is

going to happen now?" thought Helen, as she watched him enter the bar-room. Then kneeling down,

she said a prayer.

The clock had just struck noon when Mike returned, accompanied part of the way by another man, who helped him mount the difficult path which wound up the rock; and Roony needed assistance, for even when he gained the summit he could not walk straight, and fell within a yard of his door. Quick Helen ran to him; for, although his condition filled her with disgust, yet she could not abide the thought of other eyes than hers discovering him thus. "Come in, husband, come in the house," she said, taking his arm. Scarcely, however, had she got him on his feet again when he caught her by the throat and exclaimed, in the voice of a wild beast, "Ah, ha! now I'm going to beat you." But in an instant Helen broke loose from him; then rushing back into the shanty, she called her children and bade them hurry out on the rock. The little things obeyed, too innocent to know what the trouble was. Then facing her husband, who was scowling at her from the threshold, "Now enter," she said, "and beat me if you will. Here, at least, nobody will witness the deed." Roony staggered in and Helen closed the door.

That evening, after pressing her children many times to her poor bruised heart, Helen went away. She quitted the home where she had once been so happy, and, as she went, she said to herself: "If on my wedding day an angel from heaven had told me this, I should not have believed him."

But the step she was now taking was all for the best. In his madness Roony had threatened to kill her. "And he might do it," she sighed, "for when he is intoxicated he doesn't know what he is doing. And then all his life afterward he would be haunted by remorse. Poor Michael! I believe he still loves me. For his own sake I am going away."

It was Helen's intention to seek refuge with a family who dwelt not far off, and for whom she had once done some work. They received her very kindly, and wondered ever so much at the ugly cut under one of her eyes, from which the red drops were still oozing; and her upper lip, too, was cut. But Helen refused to tell who had ill-used her. "Pray, ask no questions," she said. "Only furnish me with employment; I'll drudge; I'll do anything to earn a little money." Accordingly, they gave her a number of shirts to make; and being a deft hand at needle-work, she was able to gain quite a good livelihood. But it was not for herself that Helen labored, 'twas for those whom she loved better than herself. And every evening, when the stars began to twinkle, she visited her old home, and there, peeping through the window, would watch little Mike and Nell with yearning eyes. And once she saw her husband seated by the stove, eating a piece of the bread and meat which she had left at the door the previous evening.

"Oh! thank God!" she said, "that I am able to support him and the children. Perhaps ere long my prayers will be heard, and I shall be happy again."

But Roony was still drinking steadily; even now, as he ate the cold victuals, he was barely able to sit on the chair, and so the poor woman did not venture to show herself. Next day, however, the fifth since she left home, the longed-for opportunity presented itself; Mike was sober, and with bounding heart Helen went into the shanty.

"O wife!" he exclaimed, rising to meet her, "'tis an age since I laid eyes on you. Where have you been?" Then his countenance suddenly growing dark as a thundercloud, "but, by heaven! what's happened? How came those bruises on your face? Somebody has ill-treated you! Tell me the villain's name, that I may take his heart's blood."

"I'll never tell his name," answered Helen, in a low but firm voice. "Never!"

For about a minute Roony gazed on her in silence; the mournful, the shocking truth seemed to be gradually dawning upon him. "Oh! is it possible? Could I have done it - done such a wicked, brutal thing?" he asked himself. Then, falling on his knees, he bathed her feet with bitter tears. Helen wept also, while the children ceased their gambols and wondered what was the matter. But presently the wife bade him rise, then, twining her arms round his neck, gave him a tender embrace, by which he knew that he was forgiven. And now for a brief halfhour, oh! how happy he was, and how happy she was! During the dark days which followed Helen often looked back to those fleeting moments; 'twas like a gleam of sunshine flung across a scathed and desolate landscape.

"Now, husband dear," she said after he had fondled her a little while, "let me put things to rights." Whereupon she took her broom, swept the floor, and sprinkled it with clean sand; the pictures were dusted; the clock set agoing; the rosebush watered; nor was the poor goat forgotten. And delighted, in-

deed, was the half-starved creature

to see her again.

"Helen!" exclaimed Mike, while she was thus employed, "a wife like you is a priceless treasure. Would to Heaven I had listened to you Christmas morning! What a different man I'd be now!"

"Well, love, all is bright once more," answered Helen, cheerily, He made no response save a deep

sigh.

"Why, husband dear, what troubles you?" she asked, her look of

joy vanishing in a moment.

"No slave was ever bound by such chains as bind me," he groaned, dropping his forehead in his hands. "And it all comes from that one fatal drink."

"Well, pray, dear, pray to God,

and I will pray with you.'

"Too late! The craving for liquor which seizes me at times is irresistible; 'tis seizing me now the demon!"

"O my Saviour!" cried Helen, trembling and turning pale. The words had hardly left her lips when the door opened and a strange face—at least it was new to her—peeped in.

"Time!" spoke the chief of the Black-eye Club in a voice which caused Roony to start to his feet.

"Begone!" cried Helen, advancing boldly toward the intruder.

"Time!" he repeated, now holding up a pistol. But, nothing daunted, she was about to try and close the door on him, when her husband slipped past, and ere she could recover from her amazement they were both beyond the rock and half way to the grog-shop.

That night the poor woman remained in the shanty, watching, and weeping, and praying. But her husband did not come back till sunrise; and then he was so crazy

with drink that she deemed it best to quit her home once more. Accordingly, she returned to the kind people who had given her shelter and employment. But it was not easy to settle down anew to her sewing; the needle would drop from her fingers and a cold fear thrill through her veins as she thought of the repulsive, sin-stamped face which had peeped into the shanty and enticed her dear Michael away. We may imagine, also, her agony of mind when it was reported that a burglary, accompanied by murder, had been committed during the night, and that suspicion pointed to certain members of the Black-eye Club. But, to her unspeakable relief, Mike was not among those who were arrested. The chief of the gang, however, was; and condemned, too, to be hanged; which sentence would doubtless have been carried out had he not managed to escape from prison. This incident, far from ruining the Black-eyes, only afforded them a pleasing excitement; like rats when the cat comes, they dived into their holes for a space; then out they came as flourishing as ever, and Roony was one of their most popular members.

But let us be brief with our story. Why linger over poor Helen's misery? Why tell of all the brutal treatment she suffered?

Month after month rolled by. Spring came; summer followed spring. Yet there was no change for the better in Mike. His shanty, once the prettiest and cleanest of all the shanties on Manhattan Island, grew to be the dirtiest and most forlorn-looking. The door was kicked off its hinges, ugly rags and papers fluttered in the broken windows, and occasionally the Blackeye Club assembled on the rock,

making it the scene of a drunken revel. But brave, faithful Helen continued to visit her children every evening after dark, carrying them food and clothing. would not remove them from the spot which she still called home. for she hoped that the sight of the little innocents would sooner or later call her husband back to his old self again. And every day Helen went to St. Paul's church and made the Stations of the Cross: this was her favorite devotion. "And if my Saviour suffered so much," she would say, "oh! surely, I can bear my load." Yet there were moments when she seemed well-nigh ready to sink under it. Ay, more than once Hope wrestled with Despair; but Hope always came off victorious.

If the wife's faith was still glowing, if her trust in God continued strong as ever, nevertheless in one respect a woful change appeared in her. Oh! sad was the havoc which this year of grief, of cruel ill-treatment wrought on her once bright and lovely face! 'Twas as if a coarse hand had rubbed off the delicate tints of that sweet picture, and left behind, not the ruins of her beauty, but the ruins of those ruins.

And now in time's monotonous circle winter is come round again; another Christmas is at hand. Evergreens and toys, laughing children and good-humored parents, with well-filled purses, all tell it to you. And papa and mamma, as they dash hither and thither in their jingling sleighs, doubt not but everybody else is happy too: Santa Claus will visit every home; Santa Claus will fill every stocking. Why, who could help feeling merry at this holy season?—unless, perhaps, the turkeys. Yes, it is Christmas Eve.

"How well I remember last Christmas!" sighed poor Helen as she leaned back in her chair and gazed with tearful eyes at the shirt which, alas! she was unable to finish. How could she finish it? She was barely able to see. Yet those livid, tell-tale marks on her visage, painful as they are, are easier to bear than the curses and unfeeling words which have broken her heart at last. As night approached, snow began to fall and the wind to blow-a keen, angry wind from the north-east; one of those winds we love so to hear howling round the house while we sit toasting our slippers by the fire. But, bitter cold as it was, Helen did not shrink from going to church; although half-blind, she could still find the way there.

She went; she made anew the stations of the Cross, and said, as she had so often said before, "If my Saviour suffered so much, oh! surely I can bear my load." As she breathed these words to herself the ugly black-and-blue marks which disfigured her seemed to fade away, a glow of heaven shone in her face, and for a moment, one brief moment, she became once more the beautiful Helen-Helen, "the Belle of the Shanties," as Mrs. McGowan used to call her-then suddenly she gave a start and the mien of rapture changed to a look of wonder and alarm. Who had spoken her name? There was nobody near; who could it be? While Helen was gazing about her, she heard the voice again. "Who is calling me?" she asked, her heart now throbbing violently. The words were scarcely uttered when for the third time, and more distinctly, "Helen!" sounded in her ear. "It is Michael!" she exclaimed, hastening to the door. "Yes, it is he calling me." But ere she passed out of the church she broke off a sprig of evergreen and dipped it into the holy-water font. Then hiding it in her bosom, so that the angry wind might not snatch it away, she sped homeward on winged feet.

But 'twas no easy matter to get to the rock at this hour with her poor bruised eyes and in such a driving storm. Yet she did find the way. And up the rude path she climbed with marvellous agility; 'twas as though an invisible hand

were leading her on.

The sight which Helen beheld on entering the shanty might have appalled any heart but hers. Her husband, his face streaming with blood, was engaged in a deadly struggle with a horrible-looking being much larger than himself, who seemed striving to make him drink from a cup which he pressed to his lips. "O Ellen!" cried Michael in a tone of despair, "save me! save me!" Quick she flew towards him, stretching forth at the same time the branch of evergreen. In another instant 'twas in his hand; then, just as he grasped it, his strange adversary uttered a demoniac cry and the cup fell to the floor, shattered in many pieces.

"Oh! I am saved," exclaimed Roony-"saved! saved! Thank God!" But while his joyful words were ringing through the house, the fiend turned upon his deliverer and out into the black night Helen was driven. Vainly she struggled; a powerful hand, which seemed mailed in iron, thrust her out, and presently, when released from its ruthless grip, she found herself blindly groping here and there in the darkness. Round and round the house she wandered-near it always, yet never finding it.

And during these sad moments,

the last moments of her life, her husband was anxiously seeking her But it was easy to miss each other in such a snow-storm, and when he shouted her name the wild wind carried away her response, until at length, numbed by the cold, she answered him no more. so, within a few feet of home, the brave Helen, the faithful Helen, was wrapt in a winding-sheet of snow.

Next morning-sweet Christmas morning—the sun rose in a cloudless sky; and as its bright beams flashed from window to window, from spire to spire, every object, the humblest, the least beautiful, became suddenly transformed into a thing of beauty. Ay, even those two icy hands peeping above the snow hard by Mike Roony's shanty door sparkle as if they were covered with gems and have a golden halo round them. They were clasped as if in prayer, and when poor Mike discovered them he cried aloud: "Oh! she prayed for me to the last; she prayed for me to the last!"

His wail was heard at the next rock, and far beyond it. Then a crowd began to collect, a very large crowd; for Helen was known to many, and her husband was not the only one who shed tears over her remains this bright Christmas

"I had a feeling that something was going wrong," spoke Mrs. Mc-Gowan. Then, when Roony told of the infernal being who had attacked him, and how he had been rescued by the blessed evergreen which Helen had brought, the good woman solemnly shook her head, and whispered: "This house ought to be exorcised—indeed it ought."

"Well, one thing I vow by all

that's holy," ejaculated Mike, crossing himself and lifting his voice so that the crowd might hear him—"I vow never again to touch liquor—never, never, never!"

"I join you!" exclaimed a by-

stander.

"So do I!"

"And I too!"

"And I!" shouted a number of voices. And those who spoke were members of the notorious Black-eye Club. Then they all knelt around the body and swore, hand-in-hand together, never to drink another drop of intoxicating spirits.

And thus by Helen's death many sinners were converted, many a drunkard's home made happy again; for the ways of the Lord are mysterious. Good is not seldom wrought out only through tears and suffering. Oh! who will say it was not well for Helen to die?

But poor Mike was inconsolable. He who had once been so blithe and frolicsome now spoke scarcely a word. Days and weeks rolled by, yet he did not change. We may pity him indeed! There was no light in the window now to welcome him from afar as he trudged back from his work in the dusk. And when he sat down to warm himself by the stove, instead of lighting his pipe as of yore and falling into a pleasant doze, he became strangely wakeful.

Then the spectre remorse would glide out of some shadowy corner and whisper bitter words in his ear. If at times he succeeded in silencing its voice, and would give himself up to a reverie of other days, when this miserable shanty was more gorgeous to him than a palace, oh! the pleasure which the sweet vision brought was like music heard from withinside a prison wall, like sunshine seen through the bars; for those golden days would come never more. Eternity stood between him and them.

Then back remorse would creep and whisper: "You beat her—you broke her heart—you killed her—

you did-you did!"

And one evening, while these torturing words were wringing his soul, he threw up his right hand—the hand which had struck her so often—and groaned aloud: "Oh! this is hell. Where's the axe?"

Forlorn wretch! well it was that as he bared his arm and clutched the axe—ay, well it was that at that very moment the minister of God appeared to check the rash deed he contemplated, to speak soothing words, to save him, perhaps, from madness.

And as from this hour forth a new life began for Michael Roony, we end our tale with the closing advice which the priest addressed him. "My dear friend," he said, "do not weep any more, for tears will not bring back your wife. There is nothing in this world so vain as regret. Therefore cease to mourn; strive your best to be cheerful." Then pointing to little Mike and Nell, who were playing at his feet, "work hard, too, for these children whom she bore you. For their sake, as well as your own, keep true to the pledge of temperance, and so live here on earth that one day you may meet again your dear Helen in heaven."















